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NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS — NME

New Sex Pistols

Line-up & album–exclusive details

"I was a Stranglers kidnap victim"–first hand account

Clash USA '79

Paul Simonon — Rebel Without A Car. Pic: Pennie Smith.

NME CHARTS

Week ending October 13, 1979

UK SINGLES

This Week	Last Week	Title	Artist (Label)	Weeks	Highest
1	(1)	Message In A Bottle	Police (A & M)	4	1
2	(4)	Dreaming	Blondie (Chrysalis)	3	2
3	(14)	Don't Stop Til You Get Enough	Michael Jackson (Epic)	4	3
4	(17)	Video Killed The Radio Star	Buggles (Island)	2	4
5	(16)	Live On Stage (EP)	Kate Bush (EMI)	4	5
6	(8)	What Ever You Want	Status Quo (Vertigo)	3	6
7	(3)	Cars	Gary Numan (Beggars Banquet)	6	1
8	(2)	If I Said You Had A Beautiful . . .	Bellamy Brothers (Warner Bros)	7	2
9	(12)	Since You've Been Gone	Rainbow (Polydor)	3	9
10	(5)	Sail On	Commodores (Motown)	5	5
11	(6)	Love's Gotta Hold On Me	Dollar (Carrere)	6	5
12	(11)	Cruel To Be Kind	Nick Lowe (Radar)	5	11
13	(21)	Queen Of Hearts	Dave Edmunds (Swan Song)	2	13
14	(7)	Strut Your Funky Stuff	Frantique (Philadelphia)	7	7
15	(18)	The Prince	Madness (2 Tone)	4	15
16	(19)	You Can Do It	Al Hudson (MCA)	3	16
17	(15)	Time For Action	Secret Affair (I Spy)	5	15
18	(24)	Every Day Hurts	Sad Cafe (RCA)	2	18
19	(—)	Chosen Few	Dooleys (GTO)	1	19
20	(13)	Don't Bring Me Down	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	6	3
21	(—)	One Day At A Time	Lena Martell (Pye)	1	21
22	(—)	OK Fred	Erroll Dunkley (Scope)	1	22
23	(26)	Back Of My Hand	Jags (Island)	2	23
24	(10)	We Don't Talk Anymore	Cliff Richard (EMI)	12	1
25	(20)	Reggae For It Now	Bill Lovelady (Charisma)	7	10
26	(30)	The Devil Went Down	Charles Daniels Band (Epic)	2	26
27	(22)	Slap And Tickle	Squeeze (A & M)	4	22
28	(9)	Street Life	Crusaders (MCA)	8	4
29	(—)	Gonna Get Along Without You Now	Viola Wills (Ariola/Hansa)	1	29
30	(—)	Charade	Skids (Virgin)	1	30

UP AND COMING:
Tusk — Fleetwood Mac (Reprise);
When You're In Love — Dr Hook (Capitol);
Spirit, Body & Soul — Nolan Sisters (Epic);
Now Its Gone — Chords (Polydor);
The Loneliest Man In The World — The Tourists (Logo);
Mittageisen — Siouxsie & the Banshees (Polydor).

5 YEARS AGO

Week ending October 8, 1974

	Title	Artist (Label)
1	Kung Fu Fighting	Carl Douglas (Pye)
2	Annie's Song	John Denver (RCA)
3	Gee Baby	Peter Shelley (Magnet)
4	Long Tall Glasses	Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)
5	Hang On In There Baby	Johnny Bristol (MGM)
6	Sad Sweet Dreamer	Sweet Sensation (Pye)
7	Rock Me Gently	Andy Kim (Capitol)
8	Farewell	Rod Stewart (Mercury)
9	Reggae Tune	Andy Fairweather-Low (A&M)
10	I Get A Kick Out of You	Gary Shearston (Charisma)

10 YEARS AGO

Week ending October 8, 1969

	Title	Artist (Label)
1	I'll Never Fall In Love Again	Bobbie Gentry (Capitol)
2	Je T'Aime . . . Moi Non Plus	Jane Birkin & Serge Gainsbourg (Major Minor)
3	A Boy Named Sue	Johnny Cash (CBS)
4	Lay Lady Lay	Bob Dylan (CBS)
5	Bad Moon Rising	Creedence Clearwater Revival (Liberty)
6	I'm Gonna Make You Mine	Lou Christie (Buddah)
7	He Ain't Heavy — He's My Brother	Hollies (Parlophone)
8	Nobody's Child	Karen Young (Major Minor)
9	Space Oddity	David Bowie (Philips)
10	Throw Down A Line	Cliff Richard & Hank Marvin (Columbia)

15 YEARS AGO

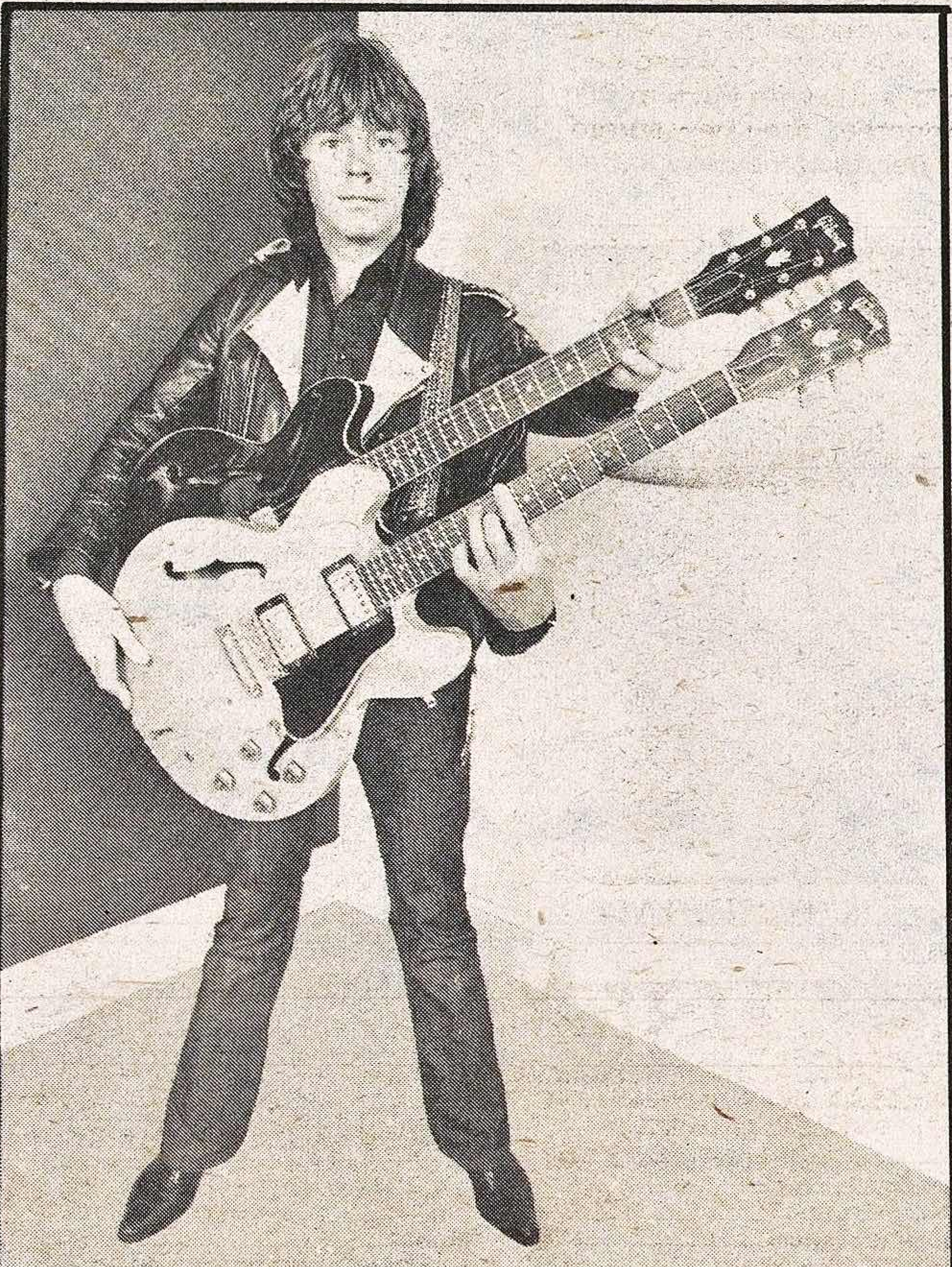
Week ending October 9, 1964

	Title	Artist (Label)
1	Oh Pretty Woman	Roy Orbison (London)
2	Always Something There To Remind Me	Sandie Shaw (Pye)
3	Where Did Our Love Go	Supremes (Stateside)
4	I'm Into Something Good	Herman's Hermits (Columbia)
5	The Wedding	Julie Rogers (Mercury)
6	When You Walk In The Room	Searchers (Pye)
7	We're Through	Hollies (Parlophone)
8	I'm Crying	Animals (Columbia)
9	Twelfth Of Never	Cliff Richard (Columbia)
10	Walk Away	Matt Monro (Parlophone)

UK ALBUMS

This Week	Last Week	Title	Artist (Label)	Weeks	Highest
1	(1)	Pleasure Principle	Gary Numan (Beggars Banquet)	5	1
2	(3)	Rock 'n' Roll Juvenile	Cliff Richard (EMI)	5	1
3	(2)	Oceans of Fantasy	Boney M (Atlantic/Hansa)	4	2
4	(4)	String of Hits	Shadows (EMI)	5	4
5	(5)	Discovery	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	19	1
6	(16)	Eat To The Beat	Blondie (Chrysalis)	2	6
7	(—)	The Raven	The Stranglers (United Artists)	1	7
8	(14)	Off The Wall	Michael Jackson (Epic)	3	8
9	(—)	Regatta De Blanc	Police (A & M)	1	9
10	(7)	Slow Train Coming	Bob Dylan (CBS)	7	2
11	(10)	Outlandos D'Amour	Police (A & M)	22	7
12	(8)	The Adventures Of The Hersham Boys	Sham 69 (Polydor)	2	8
13	(9)	I Am	Earth Wind & Fire (CBS)	18	2
14	(13)	Midnight Magic	Commodores (Motown)	6	11
15	(—)	Greatest Hits	10cc (Mercury)	1	15
16	(11)	Street Life	Crusaders (MCA)	12	5
17	(6)	In Through The Out Door	Led Zeppelin (Atlantic)	7	2
18	(—)	Unleashed In The East	Judas Priest (CBS)	1	18
19	(20)	Night Owl	Gerry Rafferty (United Artists)	18	10
20	(12)	Breakfast In America	Supertramp (A & M)	20	2
21	(22)	Down To Earth	Rainbow (Polydor)	8	7
22	(17)	Replicas	Tubeway Army (Beggars Banquet)	17	1
23	(14)	Voulez Vous	Abba (Epic)	23	1
24	(18)	Parallel Lines	Blondie (Chrysalis)	52	1
25	(23)	The Long Run	Eagles (Asylum)	2	23
26	(21)	Best Disco Album In The World	Various (WEA)	14	1
27	(20)	Join Hands	Siouxsie & The Banshees (Polydor)	3	16
28	(25)	War Of The Worlds	Jeff Wayne (CBS)	44	2
29	(—)	Survival	Bob Marley (Island)	1	29
30	(—)	A Different Kind Of Tension	Buzzcocks (United Artists)	1	30

UP AND COMING:
Dream Police — Cheap Trick (Epic);
Shooting Stars — Dollar (Carrere);
Quadrophenia — Original Soundtrack (Polydor);
Stormwatch — Jethro Tull (Chrysalis);
Another Kind Of Blues — U.K. Subs (Gem);
I'm The Man — Joe Jackson (A & M)



Dave Edmunds demonstrates his unique overdub method. We tried to find a picture of Buddy Holly singing with The Everly Brothers to celebrate the upward chart-wise mobility of 'Queen Of Hearts' but no such picture is believed to exist. So here, instead, is positive proof that behind every legendary Welsh rocker is a bleary-eyed ex pub rocker with a single one place higher in the charts. (This may seem like a sweeping statement and that's exactly what it is, but then legendary Welsh rockers are rather thin on the ground). Pic: Chalkie Davies.

US SINGLES

This Week	Last Week	Title	Artist
1	(4)	Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough	Michael Jackson
2	(2)	Sail On	Commodores
3	(1)	Sad Eyes	Robert John
4	(6)	Rise	Herb Alpert
5	(3)	My Sharona	The Knack
6	(8)	Pop Muzik	M
7	(5)	I'll Never Love This Way Again	Dionne Warwick
8	(7)	Lonesome Loser	Little River Band
9	(12)	Dim All The Lights	Donna Summer
10	(10)	Heaven Must Have Sent You	Bonnie Pointer
11	(9)	Don't Bring Me Down	Electric Light Orchestra
12	(23)	Heartache Tonight	Eagles
13	(14)	Cruel To Be Kind	Nick Lowe
14	(25)	You Decorated My Life	Kenny Rogers
15	(16)	Spooky	Atlanta Rhythm Section
16	(18)	Lovin', Touchin', Squeezin'	Journey
17	(19)	Where Were You	Logo
18	(20)	Good Girls Don't	Knack
19	(11)	A Bad Case Of Loving You	Robert Palmer
20	(15)	Driver's Seat	Sniff 'n' Tears
21	(21)	The Boss	Diana Ross
22	(27)	Dirty White Boy	Foreigner
23	(24)	Get It Right Next Time	Gerry Rafferty
24	(—)	Tusk	Fleetwood Mac
25	(17)	Born To Be Alive	Patrick Hernandez
26	(26)	Different Worlds	Maureen McGovern
27	(—)	Still	Commodores
28	(29)	Rolene	Moon Martin
29	(—)	I Know A Heartache	Jennifer Warnes
30	(—)	Please Don't Go	KC & The Sunshine Band

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

US ALBUMS

This Week	Last Week	Title	Artist
1	(1)	In Through The Out Door	Led Zeppelin
2	(2)	Get The Knack	The Knack
3	(3)	Off The Wall	Michael Jackson
4	(4)	Midnight Magic	Commodores
5	(5)	Slow Train Coming	Bob Dylan
6	(8)	Headgames	Foreigner
7	(6)	Breakfast In America	Supertramp
8	(7)	Candy O	The Cars
9	(17)	Dream Police	Cheap Trick
10	(12)	Volcano	Jimmy Buffett
11	(9)	First Under The Wire	Little River Band
12	(13)	Bad Girls	Donna Summer
13	(10)	I Am	Earth Wind & Fire
14	(14)	Rust Never Sleeps	Neil Young & Crazy Horse
15	(23)	Eve	Alan Parsons
16	(16)	Million Mile Reflections	Charlie Daniels Band
17	(20)	Identify Yourself	O'Jays
18	(15)	Dionne	Dionne Warwick
19	(11)	Risque	Chic
20	(18)	Discovery	Electric Light Orchestra
21	(21)	Street Life	Crusaders
22	(—)	Corner Stone	Styx
23	(24)	Evolution	Journey
24	(—)	Kenny	Kenny Rogers
25	(19)	Stay Free	Ashford and Simpson
26	(28)	Highway To Hell	AC/DC
27	(22)	Cheap Trick At The Budokan	
28	(25)	The Boss	Diana Ross
29	(—)	Stormwatch	Jethro Tull
30	(—)	Fear Of Music	Talking Heads

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

DISCO

	Title	Artist
(1)	You Can Do It	Al Hudson & Partners
(2)	Strut Your Funky Stuff	Frantique
(3)	Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough	Michael Jackson
(4)	When You're Number One	Gene Chandler
(5)	Feel The Real	David Bendeth
(6)	Looking For Love Tonight	F.L.B.
(7)	Dancin' And Prancin'	Candido
(8)	Gone Gone Gone	Johnny Mathis
(9)	Sexy Cream	Slick
(10)	This Time Baby	Jackie Moore

Chart supplied by: POWERHOUSE DISCO PLUS (01) 368-9852

REGGAE

	Title	Artist (Label)
1	Ethiopian Babylon	Blood Relatives & Idren (Dub Master)
2	Shine Eye	Black Uhuru featuring Keith Richard (Deroy)
3	Natty Dread A Weh She Want	Horace Andy & Tapper Zukie (Stars)
4	Shine Eye Gal	Barrington Levy & Jah Thomas (Burning Rockers)
5	Jah Love Is With I	Johnny Clark (Greensleeves)
6	Moonlight City	Augustus Pablo (Sufferers Heights)
7	Rice And Peace	Roman Stewart (Hungry Town)
8	Stereo Grass Style	Jah Thomas (Stronger Than Sampson)
9	Six Babylon	Lynval Thompson & Trevor Rankin (Lynval Thompson)
10	Hyde Park Dub	Deroy Band (Deroy)

NEWS

EDITED BY DEREK JOHNSON

UPCOMING FIXTURES FOR HUMAN LEAGUE

THE HUMAN LEAGUE, regarded in many circles as the inspiration behind a number of this year's hits, have decided to exert some influence of their own by going on the road. And they've been prompted to do so by the release this week of their new Virgin album 'Reproduction', followed tomorrow (Friday) by their single 'Empire State Human'.

The band have now extended the visual element of their stage show, by introducing a film projected on to a 21' x 14' screen, supplementing the slide images which have long been their trademark. So far 11 dates have been set for their tour, with several more still being finalised, and it's stressed that all college dates are also open to the public.

Confirmed gigs are at Huddersfield Polytechnic (November 9), London Strand Lyceum (11), Cardiff University (16), Manchester University (17), Norwich St. Andrew's Hall (21), Birmingham University (23), Bristol Locarno (25), Sheffield Top Rank (26), Nottingham University (30), Aylesbury Friars (December 1) and Guildford Civic Hall (2).

Stranglers readying own movie story

THE STRANGLERS are in the process of compiling a feature film for eventual cinema screening, although they have not fixed any specific deadline for its completion. In fact, it has been in preparation for the past two years and four hours of footage are already in the can.

The final product will include lengthy in-concert sequences, which they've been filming over the months at various gigs at home and abroad — and they intend to continue filming during their autumn tour. The movie will also feature the band on the road and off duty, as well as specially-written novelty interludes — part fantasy, part satire — which will mark their debut as actors!

Last week they were in Portugal to shoot a satirical segment for the picture and, while they were there, they took the opportunity of filming a promotional clip for their new single 'Nuclear Device' — though it's not yet known if this clip will also find its way into the movie, which appears to be a sort of new-wave 'The Kids Are Alright'!

● Curves — a five-piece American band from Seattle, who've recently moved to England to base themselves here — have been added to The Stranglers' tour. They're signed to the Epic label.

● The Stranglers have inadvertently delivered a blow for the cause of those members of the general public, who complain that they are unable to gain admission to college gigs. By mistake, tickets for their show at Lancaster University tomorrow (Friday) went on sale a week before the intended date — and before the students returned from summer vacation. The public snapped them up so quickly that there were none left for the students when the new term began!

● THE CLASH expect their film 'Rude Boy' to be screened in selected cinemas early in the New Year, although a distribution deal hasn't yet been set for the two-hour movie. There will also be a soundtrack album to coincide with the film's opening. As already reported, their new studio album is due in November, to coincide with their late autumn tour.

PRETENDERS: LONDON RESIDENCY & SINGLE

THE PRETENDERS are to play a four-week Monday-night residency at London Marquee Club on October 22 and 29, November 5 and 12 (admission £1.50), and these will be their only British dates for the remainder of the year. Object of the exercise is to preview material from their next album, currently nearing completion with Chris Thomas producing, planned for January release. Meanwhile they have a new single titled 'Brass In Pocket', penned by Chrissie Hynde and James Honeyman-Scott, out on Real Records at the beginning of next month.

● THE ANGELIC UPSTARTS have added another four dates to their UK tour, reported two weeks ago. They are Aberdeen Fusion Ballroom this Sunday, Forfar Reid Hall (October 15), a second gig at London Kensington Nashville (25) and Southampton University (November 3).

Pretender CHRISSIE HYNDE

'Parallel Lines' now unbeatable as tops of 1979

BLONDIE'S UNIQUE LP TRIUMPH

BLONDIE this week learned that their album 'Parallel Lines' has already emerged as the top LP of 1979 in the NME Chart Points Table — an achievement never before accomplished by any album as early in the year as mid-October. It has already amassed sufficient points (more than last year's winning total of 959 by 'Saturday Night Fever') to ensure that it cannot be overtaken — even if its next nearest rival, Supertramp's 'Breakfast In America', were to be at No.1 for the remainder of the year!

And it looks as though the band's new album 'Eat To The Beat' is destined for similar success. It shipped Gold prior to its official release date, and a spokesman said that by last Friday — one week after it was issued — it had chalked up UK sales in excess of 300,000.

Meanwhile, it now seems likely that we shall be seeing Debbie Harry on the cinema screen before the end of the year. Her film 'Union City' — which started out as a home movie for kicks, the brainchild of her boyfriend and group mentor Chris Stein, but was subsequently picked up by a major company following the band's US breakthrough — is now almost complete.

Debbie has the star role of a frustrated housewife in the picture, which will hopefully open in London some time around Christmas, prior to going on release to selected cinemas. It's not yet clear if this is the first step in a developing film career for Debbie, although plans for her to make a film called 'Alphaville' with Robert Fripp have now apparently been dropped.

As far as British dates are concerned, Blondie's London spokesman said: "I'm totally convinced that they'll be playing concerts here early in the New Year." In fact, Debbie said at the weekend that she and Chris are hoping to come to London in December for "a working holiday" — part Christmas shopping, and part discussions on their upcoming tour.

TEN YEARS LATER —A MONTH LATER

ALVIN LEE'S Ten Years Later called off their three British concerts scheduled for this week — at Birmingham (Monday), Newcastle (Wednesday) and London Hammersmith (this Saturday) — within a couple of days of announcing them! It's understood that the gigs, which were reported in our last issue, are being re-scheduled for November. It seems that Lee wanted his UK visit to include an appearance in BBC-2's 'Old Grey Whistle Test' — and he can't get a booking on the show until November!

Squeezed out!

Squeezed together for our picture are, from left to right, JOOLS HOLLAND, JOHN BENTLEY, GILSON LAVIS, CHRIS DIFFORD and GLEN TILLBROOK.

TOUR CHANGES MEAN 16 TOWNS MISS OUT

SQUEEZE have totally re-vamped their UK autumn tour, which had been due to open this Sunday, but has now been postponed until November. What was to have been a major 28-date outing has been squeezed into an 18-gig schedule, with many of the original venues omitted from the revised itinerary. Reason for this upheaval is that recording sessions for their new album are taking much longer than expected, and are over-running madly.

When the tour was first announced last month, it was pointed out that the first six dates were subject to confirmation, due to recording commitments. In fact, the first 21 dates have now been scrapped — and the only seven remaining from the original list are Oxford Polytechnic (November 6), London Hammersmith Odeon (9), Dunstable Queensway Hall (10), Exeter University (13), Plymouth Top Rank (14), Swansea University (15) and Cardiff University (16).

Three venues have now acquired new dates — Birmingham Odeon (now November 11), Blackpool Tiffany's (22) and Manchester Apollo (23) — for which existing tickets will still be valid. And instead of visiting Sheffield Top Rank, the band now play two shows at Sheffield Limit Club on November 20. Also, the Bristol Locarno show — which should have opened the tour this Sunday — will now take place at the Colston Hall on November 12.

The other 16 towns and cities on the original date sheet, including all Scottish gigs, will not now be visited — although Squeeze will make a point of including them in their next tour — and this means that existing ticket-holders must apply for cash refunds. But that band have confirmed brand new bookings at Wakefield Unity Hall (November 7), Loughborough Town Hall (8), Dublin University (17), Belfast Queen's University (18), Coleraine Ulster University (19) and Malvern Winter Gardens (21).

AND THERE COULD BE MORE

As NME closed for press, it was learned that — even on the revised Squeeze schedule — the first few dates are still subject to confirmation, owing to the recording over-run. A final decision on the exact starting date of the tour will not be taken until their timetable is clarified in a week or two.

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Original Caravan for reunion tour

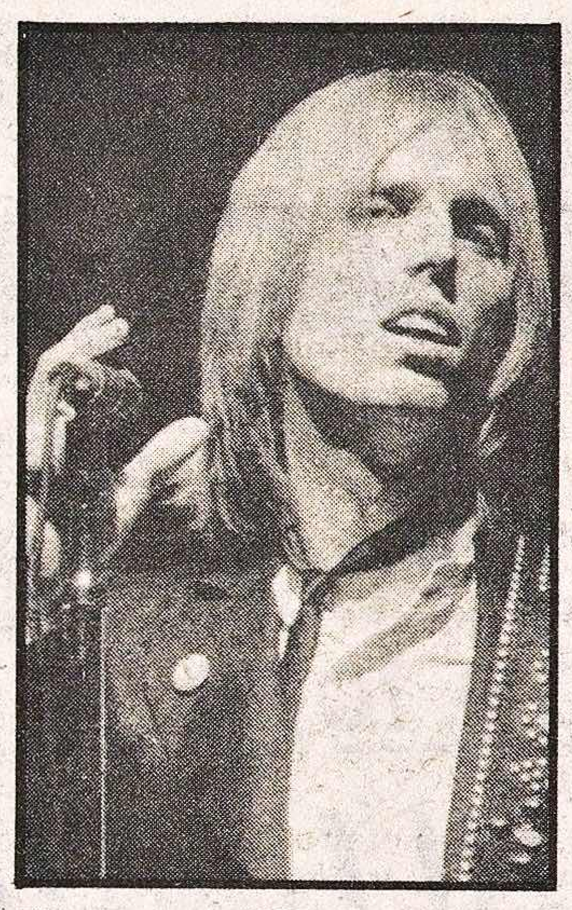
CARAVAN set out on their autumn tour at the end of this month, and it's already developed into a considerably longer itinerary than the two weeks originally planned. So far 17 dates have been confirmed, and there are more still being finalised. And for this tour, their first UK outing for 18 months, they have now reverted to their original line-up of David Sinclair, Richard Sinclair, Pye Hastings, Richard Coughlan and Geoff Richardson. A new album will be coming out next month.

Gigs to date are **York** University (October 29), **Durham** Bede College (30), **Southampton** University (31), **Bath** University (November 2), **Cromer** West Runton Pavilion (9), **Manchester** Polytechnic (10), **Birmingham** Digbeth Civic Hall (11), **Canterbury** Odeon (13), **Keele** University (14), **St Austell** New Cornish Riviera (17), **Plymouth** Fiesta (19), **Reading** University (20), **Loughborough** University (21), **Guildford** Surrey University (23), **Slough** College of Education (24), **London** Rainbow Theatre (25) and **Leeds** Grand Theatre (26).

Caravan's PYE HASTINGS

Albertos season

ALBERTO Y Lost Trios Paranoias star in their own show 'Never Mind The Bullocks' (subtitled 'A Knight To Remember') at Manchester University's Squat Theatre for an eight-day season — October 24-27 and October 31-November 3. It was written by C P Lee and John Dowie, and is described as "a medieval farce".



Petty album and New Year tour

TOM PETTY & The Heartbreakers have signed a long-term worldwide deal with Backstreet Records, a new label owned by MCA, who are to rush release the band's latest album 'Damn The Torpedoes' on November 8. The outfit spend the rest of this year touring in the States, but it was learned this week that they are being lined up for a European tour (including Britain) early in the New Year.

Record News

● The single 'Die Trying' by New York band **New Math**, which sold out its initial pressing on the independent Reliable Records label, has been picked up by CBS who reissue it nationally this weekend.

● **Peter Tosh's** 'Stepping Razor' is being reissued by Virgin to coincide with its use as the main theme in the new film 'Rockers'. The single comes out on October 26, coupled with 'Legalise It', one of Tosh's best-known songs.

● A&M this week issue a compilation album titled 'Propaganda', as a follow-up to last year's 'No Wave' set. It features tracks by **Squeeze, The Police, Joe Jackson, The Secret, Bobby Henry, Shrink** and **The Reds**. It sells at the special price of £3.18.

● Liverpool band **Marseille**, who support Whitesnake on their UK tour opening this week, have their album 'Marseille' issued by Mountain tomorrow (Friday). Out the same day is a single taken from the LP titled 'Bring On The Dancing Girls'.

● The third reggae sampler album from Virgin-Front Line, out on October 19 and costing only £2.15, features **Gregory Issacs, Sly Dunbar, The Mighty Diamonds, The Gladiators, U-Roy, I-Roy, The Twinkle Brothers, Prince Far I** and **The Abyssinians**. Title is 'Front Line III.'

● And from Front Line this week comes the new **Culture** album 'International Herb' — plus a 12-inch single from **The Twinkle Brothers** comprising 'Jahoviah', 'Free Africa', and dub versions of both, with a total playing time of nearly 20 minutes.

● The new single from **Chas & Dave** is 'What A Miserable Saturday Night', one of their most popular live songs and taken from their current album 'Don't Give A Monkeys'. The coupling is 'It's Only The B-Side.' It's issued by EMI this weekend.

● A special **James Brown** EP, featuring three big soul hits from the 1965 era, is released by Polydor on October 19 in a picture bag. Titles are 'Papa's Got A Brand New Bag', 'Out Of Sight' and 'I Got You, I Feel Good'.

● **The Monks** have their debut album issued by EMI on November 2, with the not unexpected title 'Bad Habits'. And this weekend sees the release of their latest single 'Johnny B. Rotten' — written after their encounter with Mr Lydon on 'Juke Box Jury'.

● The first Stevenage Rock Against Racism EP is out this week, containing two tracks each from **The Syndicate** and **Restricted Hours**. Available from usual independent outlets, or at £1.15 (including p&p) from 14 Grove Court, Arlesey, Beds.

● **World Service** have their debut three-track EP 'Definite Uncertainties' issued this week by Warp Records. Besides the usual outlets, it will also be available at most of the band's gigs — see News Round-Up.

● A 16-track album titled 'Is The War Over?', featuring eight bands from the Cardiff area, is issued this week by local label Z Block Records, Flat One, 1 Walker Road, Splott, Cardiff. Price is £2.25 (including p&p).

● Weird Records release a 90-minute live cassette of their current 'Weird Tales' tour, which feature **The Astronauts, The Mob, Zounds,** and **The Androids Of Mu.** Two other cassettes from the same source are 'Really Weird' with the same four bands; and 'Auto Verite' with **Daevid Allen, Cardiac Arrest, The Horrible Nurds** and **Danny & The Dressmakers.** Available at £1.50 each from Basement Flat, 243 Lancaster Road, London W11.

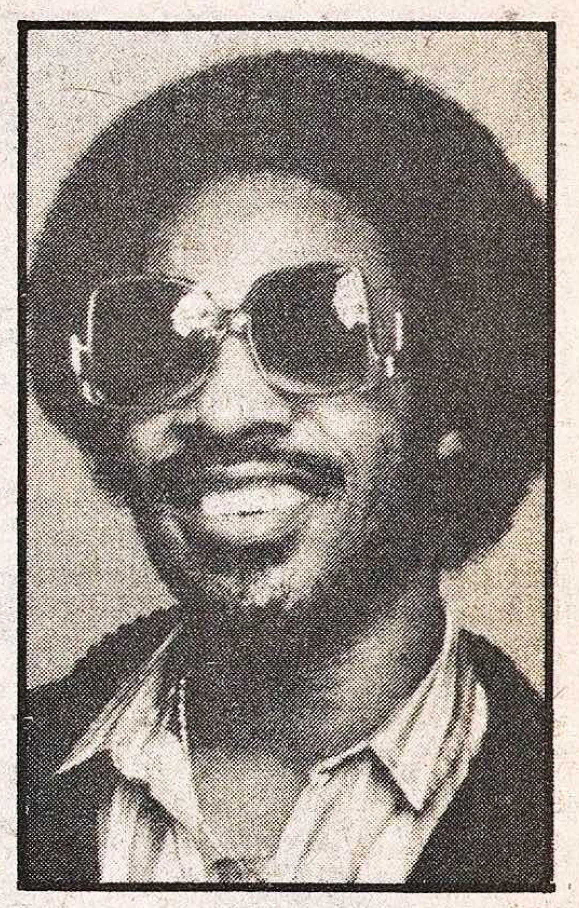
● Upcoming next month from Essex label Wax Records is a single titled 'Keep Dancing' by the **Steve Hooker Band** of Southend, written and produced by ex-Kursaal Flyers stalwart Paul Shuttleworth.

● Oxford band **English Subtitles** make their first vinyl appearance this week, with the release by Small Wonder of their single 'Time Tunnel.'

● **Disco Students** have released their first single on the Yeah Yeah Yeah label, coupling, 'South Africa House' and 'Kafkaesque'. Available at £1 (including p&p) from 8 Ripon House, Bishops Walk, Aylesbury. They're being lined up for a tour to promote it.

● **Fat Gadget's** debut single, out on Mute Records, is a double A-side coupling 'Back To Nature' and 'The Box'. Distribution is by Rough Trade and Spartan.

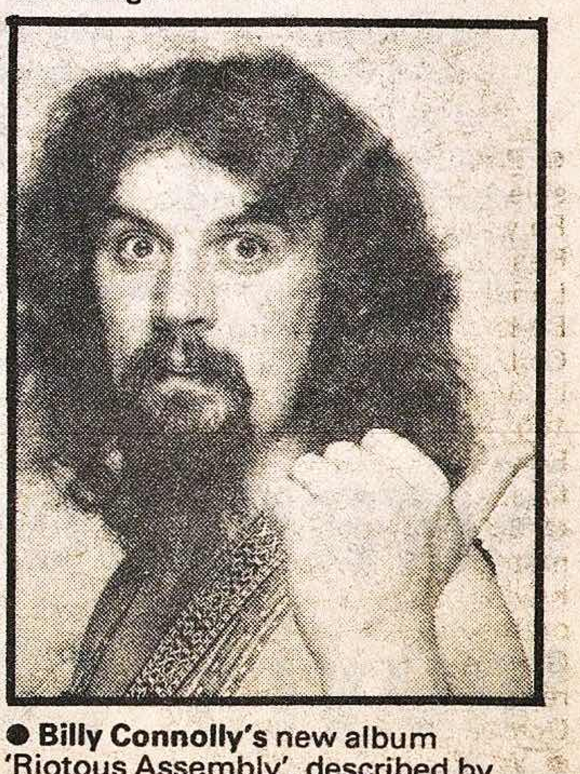
● **Mickey Jupp's** first album on Chryslis, for whom he recently signed, is issued on October 19. Titled 'Long Distance Runner', it was produced by Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, who also play on the set along with Andy Mackay (sax) and Gary Tibbs (drums). Jupp hopes to play a few selected dates before Christmas.



Stevie's secret loses its scent

STEVIE WONDER's upcoming double album 'Journey Through The Secret Life Of Plants' will not after all, have a perfumed sleeve! It seems that a phial of the proposed scent was flown to Britain for analysis by EMI's technical department — who found that it actually attacks vinyl, causing surface damage.

So the idea was dropped immediately, and now the unsmelly album — containing such titles as 'Venus Flytrap And The Bug' and 'Black Orchid', and featuring guests Syreeta and Tata Vega — will be coming out at the end of this month. One of the tracks 'Send One Your Love' will be issued simultaneously as a single.



● **Billy Connolly's** new album 'Riotous Assembly', described by Polydor as "the funniest LP for years", is released on October 19. It contains his recent single 'In The Brownies' — which, incidentally, is reissued on November 2 in a picture bag.

● Bristol band **The Colour Tapes** have their first single out on Wavelength Records, distributed by Rough Trade and Pinnacle. Tracks are 'Cold Anger' and 'Leaves Of China', and it was produced by Mark Stewart of The Pop Group.

● Plymouth new-wave outfit **Sabotage** have their debut single 'When The War Is Over' out on Optimistic Records. Available through the usual outlets, or by post priced £1.10 (including p&p) from Billy Hurman, 45 Prince Maurice Road, Lipson, Plymouth, Devon.

● Martha High, the 13-year-old singer recently seen in London as part of the James Brown Revue, has been signed by Salsoul Records who'll be issuing her debut single at the end of the month. Her first album follows towards the end of the year.

● **Spherical Objects** have their second album, a 13-track set called 'Eliptical Optimism', released this weekend by Object Music — distributed by Rough Trade, Red Rhino, Pinnacle and Bonaparte.

SAMSON SHOW THEIR METTLE

SAMSON, the heavy metal outfit currently on tour as support to Gillan and Randy California, begin their own headlining tour next month — supported by the new Nicky Moore Band, Moore being an ex-member of Hackensack and Big Jim Sullivan's Tiger. Samson's first album 'Survivors' is issued this week by Lazer Records, and dates confirmed so far (with at least seven more to come) are:

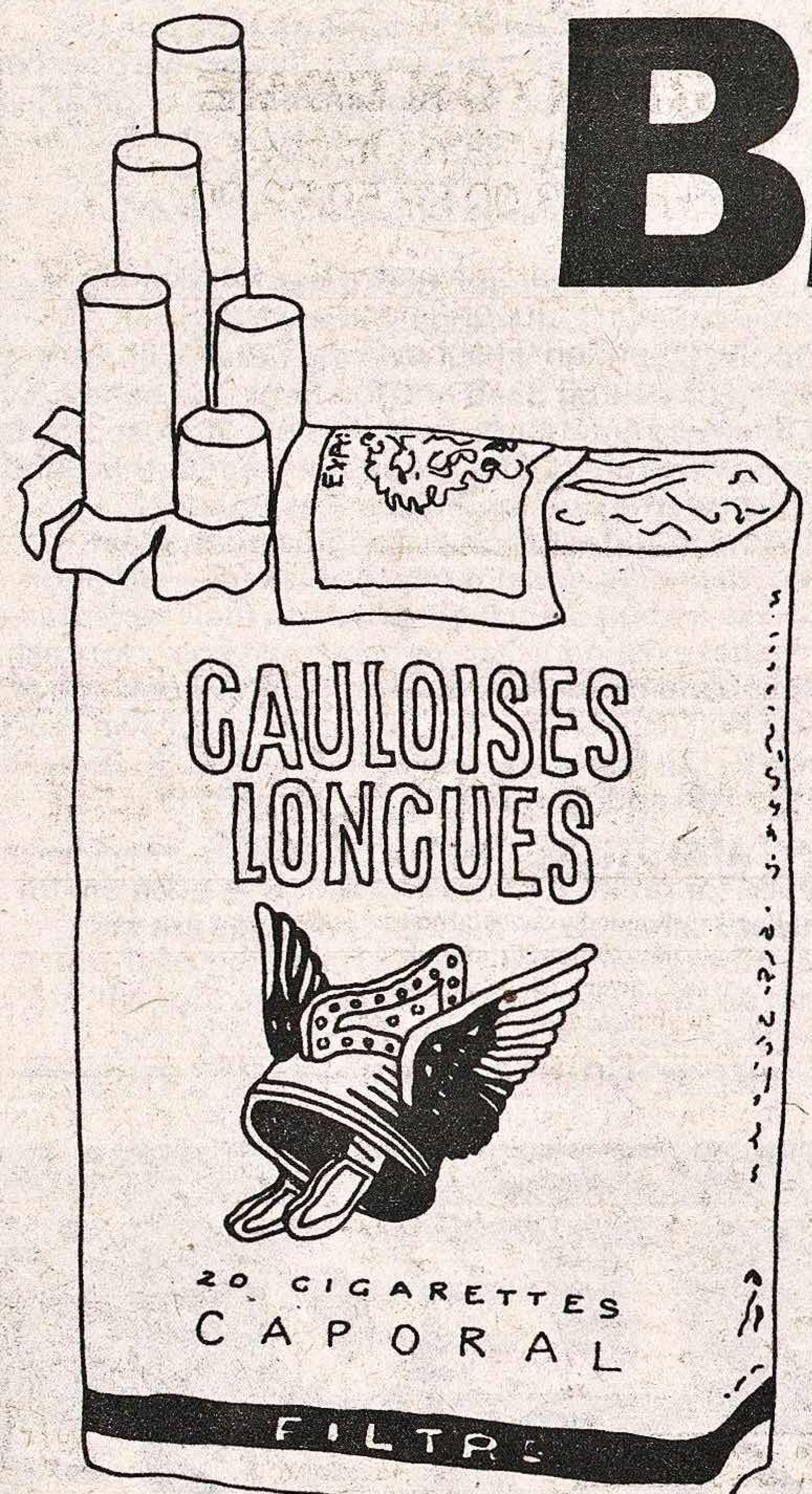
London City Polytechnic (November 2), **Newbridge** Memorial Hall (4), **Aberystwyth** University (5), **Salford** University (6), **Liverpool** University (7), **London** Queen Mary College (9), **London Chelsea** College (10), **Huddersfield** Polytechnic (13), **Bradford** Princeville (15), **Newcastle** University (16), **York** College of Ripon & St. John (17), **Leeds** University (19), **London** School of Economics (21), **Portsmouth** Polytechnic (22), **Coventry** Warwick University (23), **Cardiff** University (27), **Glasgow** Strathclyde University (29), **Stirling** University (30), **Dundee** Technical College (December 1), **Canterbury** Kent University (4), **Norwich** East Anglia University (5), **Swansea** University (6), **Bristol** University (7) and **Folkestone** Leas Cliff Hall (8).

DAMNED SCRAP TOUR PLANS

THE DAMNED this week scrapped their previously announced tour itinerary, which should have opened on November 3 and taken in a concert at London Rainbow on November 30 — and they say that recording sessions are to blame. They've decided to re-mix some of the tracks on their new album 'Machine Gun Etiquette', although it's still hoped to have it in the shops next month. Their tour will now open at Cambridge Corn Exchange on November 23, and the rest of their revised schedule is currently being finalised.

● SIOUXSIE And The Banshees' tour suffered another interruption last week — though, fortunately, this time it wasn't due to defecting members. She had to call off a couple of dates, as she was suffering from laryngitis — at Newcastle (October 3) and Carlisle (4) — but these gigs will be re-scheduled as soon as possible. The tour resumed last weekend.

On the similarity between Batley and Biarritz.



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COHEN FOR 9 DATES

LEONARD COHEN returns to Britain after a three-year absence to headline nine December concerts, including a string of three at Hammersmith Odeon. He'll be playing with a seven-piece backing band plus three girl singers, one of whom is Jennifer Warnes, and the UK dates come at the tail end of a European tour. Cohen will be featuring material from his new album 'Recent Songs', just released by CBS.

Dates are **London Hammersmith** Odeon (December 4, 5 and 6), **Birmingham** Odeon (8), **Manchester** Apollo (9), **Glasgow** Apollo (10), **Edinburgh** Odeon (11), **Aberdeen** Capitol (12) and **Brighton** Dome (15). Ticket prices are £6, £5, £4 and £3 (London); and £5, £4, £3 and £2 (elsewhere) — they go on sale at box-offices in about a week's time, though postal bookings are being accepted by all theatres immediately.

Hello, Enid

THE ENID go on tour to promote their new album 'Six Pieces', issued by Pye this weekend. Confirmed dates are **Uxbridge** Brunel University (October 19), **Leicester** University (23), **Reading** Hexagon (24), **Edinburgh** Heriot Watt University (26), **Manchester** Free Trade Hall (November 9), **Birmingham** Digbeth Civic Hall (10), **London** Rainbow Theatre (11), **Oakengates** Town Hall (16), **Poole** Wessex Hall (25), **High Wycombe** Town Hall (26) and **Keele** University (28), with more gigs to follow.

KNEBWORTH GOES DISCO

WITH UNCERTAINTY surrounding the future of Knebworth as a concert venue, following the collapse of the company which has presented all previous shows there, comes the news that the venue will be back in action again next spring — as a disco! What's more, the organisers claim that it will be the "biggest disco in the world", and it's already scheduled for Spring Bank Holiday Monday, May 26 (noon-11 pm).

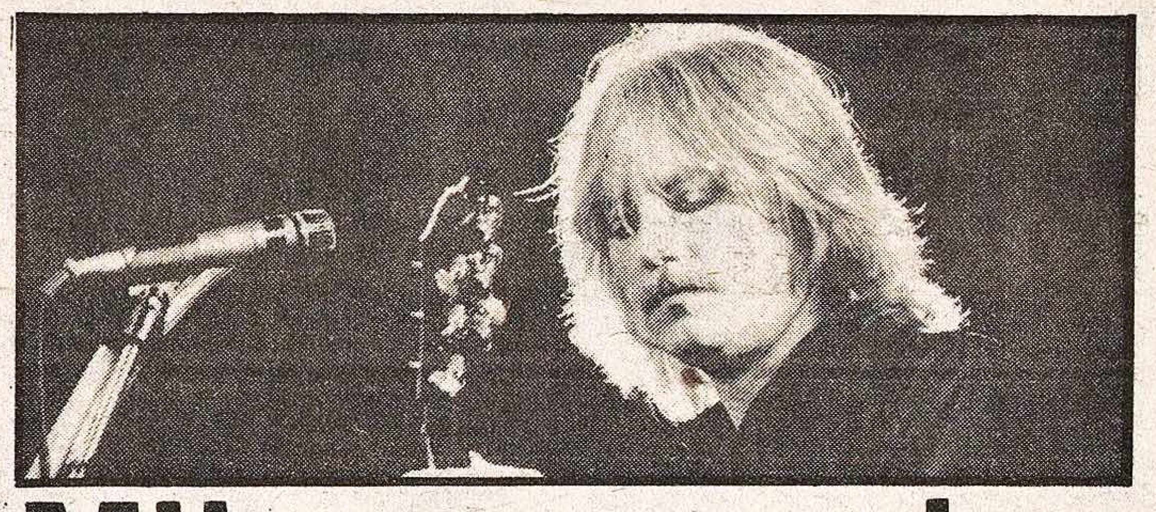
The event, called National Soul Day, will take place in a massive eight-pole circus tent specially designed for the occasion — floored throughout for dancing, and with a full light show and three bandstands. With a 15,000 capacity and an area of 40,000 square feet (bigger than Wembley Arena), this means that everything will be under cover.

Showstopper Promotions, who also present the highly successful soul weekends at holiday camps, are booking eight top soul bands for the show and at least a dozen leading disc-jockeys. Full details of all the acts involved, together with booking arrangements, will be announced shortly.

AND DISCO IN ROYAL SHOW

DISCO is also making its presence felt in this year's Royal Variety Show, to be staged at London Drury Lane Theatre Royal on Monday, November 26 — with Boney M and Amii Stewart, both Hansa-Atlantic acts, featured on the bill. Commented Jay Vickers of Hansa: "It's the first time for many years that the show has reflected a more contemporary facet of pop music." The event is due to be screened this year by ITV — strike permitting.

AMII STEWART



Miles to travel

JOHN MILES has now confirmed the majority of dates for his autumn tour, which he'll be undertaking with his regular backing band. Dates set are at **Birmingham** Aston University (November 14), **Newcastle** Mayfair (15), **Salford** University (16), **Leicester** Polytechnic (17), **Bournemouth** Winter Gardens (19), **Norwich** East Anglia University (20), **Oxford** Polytechnic (21), **Plymouth** Polytechnic (22), **Bristol** University (23), **York** University (27), **Bradford** University (28) and **Sheffield** University (December 1). **London** dates — for which November 24, 25 and 26 have been set aside — are still unconfirmed, but will be announced shortly.

Surprisingly, Decca have no new Miles product lined up to coincide with the tour.

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **PRESSURE SHOCKS** play selected autumn gigs at Bristol Polytechnic (tonight, Thursday), Reading University (October 17), London Strand Kings College (18), Bedford Civic Theatre (20), Harrow College (November 2), Durham University (17), London Oxford St. 100 Club (22) and Hatfield Polytechnic (December 14). A full tour begins in January.

● **BORICH** — the Australian heavy metal band fronted by guitarist Kevin Borich — have added a string of three gigs at London Fulham Greyhound to their UK tour, reported last week. They are on October 21, 22 and 25.

● **WORLD SERVICE** return to the live circuit this week with a tour called 'The Battle Of Britain 79', which will run through to December. October dates so far are Uxbridge Unit One (tomorrow, Friday), Bristol Granary (Saturday), London Covent Garden Rock Garden (Sunday), Egham Royal Holloway College (20), London Imperial College (27) and London Camden Dingwalls (29).

● **CHARLIE DANIELS BAND,** who made their NME Chart debut last week with their Epic single 'The Devil Went Down', play three nights at London Victoria The Venue from November 2 to 4 inclusive — preceded by a concert at Southport Theatre on November 1. The band's new album 'Million Mile Reflections' is out this week.

● **YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA,** whom you may have seen on film in this week's 'Old Grey Whistle Test', make their only British live appearance at London Victoria The Venue next Tuesday (16). Their album, with their name as its title, is available on A&M.

● **THE REGULARS** play one of their rare London dates on November 1 at the Music Machine in Camden (tickets £1.75). The band's new single 'Hey Girl Don't Bother Me' (from their album 'Victim') has just been issued by CBS.

● **TREVOR RABIN,** whose second album 'Face To Face' has just been issued by Chrysalis, is to support Steve Hillage on his UK tour opening October 26. And he's formed a new four-piece backing band specially for the outing.

● **STEVE GIBBONS** has broken up his band after a three-year span, during which they recorded four albums for Polydor and headlined several nationwide tours. But this is only a temporary hiatus, as he intends getting a new outfit together in the near future, and will presumably continue working under the banner of the Steve Gibbons Band. Meanwhile he's busy working on material for a new album.

● **JOHN POTTER'S CLAY** have folded, following the departure of lead singer Mike Maynard, due to an internal disagreement. Potter himself, who was formerly pianist with the Wilko Johnson band, has apparently decided to quit the music business altogether. And Maynard is currently looking for another gig.

● **MANYANA** have been re-formed by keyboards man Steve Alpert and bassist-singer Jorge Spiteri, who were originally co-leaders of the now-defunct Spiteri outfit. The new eight-strong line-up, fronted by Swedish girl singer Zana, start gigging this month.

● **DUFFO** is playing a string of London night-club dates during the next few weeks — at Chelsea Wedgies (this Thursday, October 18, 25 and 31), Chelsea Country Cousin (this Friday and Saturday), Covent Garden Blitz (October 20) and W.1. Maunkberry's (November 6-8). He's also at Guildford Bunters Club on October 15.

● **SNIFF 'N' THE TEARS** drummer Luigi Salvoni has left the band, on the eve of their 47-date debut tour of America, due to differences in musical direction. He's already in the process of forming a new band with another ex-Sniffer, Chris Birkin.

● **SORE THROAT** have added Newport The Village (tomorrow, Friday), Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic (October 31) and Manchester Funhouse (November 2) to their previously reported tour. Their gig on October 24 is switched from Manchester Poly to London Camden Music Machine.

Specials extra

ANOTHER nine dates have been confirmed for the massive package tour by The Specials, Madness and The Selecter including a major London appearance at the Lyceum Ballroom in the Strand on Sunday, November 25. These are in addition to the two dozen gigs reported last week, and a further batch is expected to be announced next week.

The other new bookings are at Glasgow Tiffany's (November 11), Ayr Pavilion (14), Carlisle Market Hall (15), Leeds University (16), Shrewsbury Music Hall (19), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (26), Cleethorpes Winter Gardens (28) and Coventry Tiffany's (29). The gig on November 1 is switched from Blackburn Golden Palms to Lancaster University.

● The Selecter's last London appearance before joining the package is at Camden Electric Ballroom this Saturday (13), supported by The Mo-Dettes and The Beat. Tickets are all at the one price of £2.

GANG OF FOUR TOUR: NOW TILL DECEMBER

THE GANG OF FOUR begin an extensive tour this weekend, running through into December, in support of their first Harvest album 'Entertainment'. With more dates to be finalised, those confirmed so far are London University (this Saturday), Edinburgh Tiffany's (October 15), Aberdeen Ruffles (16), Glasgow Technical College (17), Dundee Art College (19), Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall (30), Bradford University (31), Retford Porterhouse (November 2), Loughborough University (3), Reading University (6), Brighton Top Rank (7), Guildford Civic Hall (8), Oxford Polytechnic (9), Aylesbury Friars (10), Bristol Locarno (11), Southampton University (14), Huddersfield Polytechnic (16), Liverpool Eric's (17), Southampton University (14), Huddersfield Polytechnic (16), Liverpool Eric's (17), Cardiff Top Rank (21), London Camden Electric Ballroom (23 and 24), Norwich St. Andrew's Hall (26), Sheffield Limit (27), Leeds University (28), Cambridge Corn Exchange (30) and Manchester Factory (December 1). The support spot will alternate between The Au-Pairs, The Delta Five and The Red Crayola.

MORE RICHARD & LINDA GIGS

RICHARD and LINDA Thompson have added another four dates to their UK tour, reported four weeks ago and highlighted by an appearance at London Rainbow on November 3. They are Manchester University (October 26), Chatham Central Hall (November 6), Bradford University (9) and Belfast University Whitla Hall (21).

They have a new double A-side single 'Georgie On A Spree'/'Civilisation' issued by Chrysalis on October 19 — the first title was penned by Richard as the theme for the upcoming BBC-1 drama series 'Kiss The Girls And Make Them Cry', and the coupling is taken from the duo's latest album 'Sunnyvista'.

MOODIES ADD

THE MOODY BLUES have added yet another date to their first British concert series since 1973 — at Stafford Bingley Hall on November 1. So their full itinerary now reads Glasgow Apollo (October 29), Stafford (31 and November 1), Wembley Arena (3 and 4) and Brighton Centre (6). And the reissue of their former No. 1 hit 'Nights In White Satin' is now confirmed by Decca for October 19.

KANDIDATE'S APPLICATION

KANDIDATE, who climbed to No. 6 in the NME Chart earlier this year with their single 'I Don't Wanna Lose You,' begin their first headlining tour this week. With a further week of dates to be confirmed, the soul-funk band are so far set for **Watford** Bailey's (this Thursday to Saturday), **Leicester** Bailey's (October 15-20), **Brighton** Sherry's (23), **Birkenhead** Hamilton Club (24), **London Hounslow** Top Hat (25), **Isle of Sheppey** New Island Hotel (27), **Bath** Tiffany's (28), **Bristol** Snuffy's (29), **Newcastle** Madison's (30), **Doncaster** Main Line (31), **Norwich** Cromwells (November 2), **Cromer** West Runton Pavilion (3), **Salford** The Willows (4), **Leeds** Warehouse (5), **Southend** Talk Of The South (6), **Walsall** Town Hall (7), **Blackburn** Romeo & Juliet's (8-10), **Birmingham** Romeo & Juliet's (12-17) and **Dunstable** Queensway Hall (18).

Kate'n'Cliff special

KATE BUSH and CLIFF RICHARD join forces in a special one-off concert at London Royal Albert Hall on Sunday, November 18 — supported by the full London Symphony Orchestra and the 150-strong London Symphony Chorus. Promoted by Anthony Haas, the event is in aid of the LSO's 75th Birthday Appeal. Tickets are priced £10, £7.50, £5.50, £3.50, £2.50 and £1.50, and they're on sale at the box-office from October 20 — or from next Monday (15) at AHP Promotions Ltd., 130 Great Portland Street, London W1 (01-636 7053).

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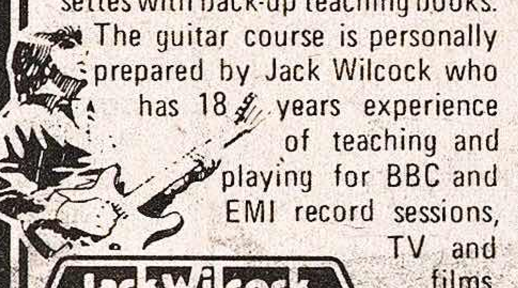

Every form of escapism carries implicit political messages

GABBA GABBA HEGEL

Guerilla war struggle is a new entertainment

The Gang Of Four face ideological scrutiny by Graham Lock. Chris Horler stands back and takes the pix.

Economic Circumstances Hire A Van

FIVE o'clock on a Friday afternoon and The Gang Of Four's van breaks down in the Lincoln Tunnel, through which runs the only main road south out of Manhatten. The traffic jam is sensational.

Hugo grins. "It was great. Our first day there and we brought New York to a standstill."

. . . "hi there all you GROSS OUT rock'n'rolling LOVERS of fun, fun, FUN! Have we gotta TREAT in store for YOU! You've just heard from BURLY, BOISTEROUS, BRISTLE–HEADED HUGO BURNHAM whose BULGING biceps are the muscular POWERHOUSE that drives the WAY–OUT rhythms of AMAZING new rock group THE FANG OF GORE. Huggable Hugo, who lives in LEEDS and wants to be a FILM STAR, will be back LATER to tell you what HE thinks of the ROYAL FAMILY and explain why it is that DRUMMERS never get THE GIRLS!" . . .

STRUGGLES IN THE BEDROOM (AND EVERYWHERE ELSE)

"Is your leisure time private?"

The scene is the front room of the North London flat which is Jon King's first fixed abode since last December. Completely by chance, it's the same flat that I've been living in for some four weeks. In fact King, vocalist of The Gang Of Four, arrived only 48 hours ago, on returning from the group's American tour, and has spent over half the intervening period asleep.

Jet lag is still taking its toll and the rest of the group — Dave Allen, Hugo Burnham and Andy Gill — are sprawled around the floor looking desperately tired. The interview, though, turns out to be an animated affair, lasts for two and a half hours and accounts for three pots of tea and half a bottle of whisky.

There is plenty to discuss. Just back from the States where they played a few gigs with The Buzzcocks and a lot on their own, the group had their debut album 'Entertainment!' released by EMI on October 5th. Their first major British tour will begin shortly.

Of equal interest are the arguments which seem to follow in the wake of The Gang Of Four. Can a 'political' group be 'entertaining'? Should they have signed with EMI? How do they relate to the 'rock'n'roll tradition'? What is the *purpose* of their music? Later they talk about these questions and the contexts in which they arise. But first . . . . .

'Entertainment!'

I think it's the best debut album I've ever heard. An immediate and innovative expression of radical music. The Gang Of Four have achieved a tautness and ferocity reminiscent of John Lennon's first solo releases. But whereas Lennon never seemed able to resolve the (false) dichotomy between feelings ('Plastic Ono Band') and statement ('Sometime In New York City') — which are merely different modes of describing the same relationship of self/society — a song like 'Contract' makes plain the feminist dictum that the personal *is* political: *'These social dreams / Put in practise in the bedroom / Is this so private / Our struggle in the bedroom'.*

This awareness that experience cannot be compartmentalised informs all Gang Of Four lyrics. The last time I spoke to them King, who writes most of the words, explained: "I think all of our songs are about people whose options have been closed to them, and unreasonably closed. Options to have a fulfilling life, or develop themselves personally, or whatever."

'Entertainment!' looks at the methods by which these options are closed, and particularly at the role played in that process by various elements of the communications industry — television, newspapers, rock'n'roll. It emphasises that privacy is an illusion, that leisure is just another form of socialisation: even such a supposedly 'personal' experience as sex is determined by a social teaching network that includes — for example — *TOTP, Playboy,* and the fact that contraceptive machines are found only in lavatories while cigarette machines occupy bus stations, railway stations, cinemas, street corners and so on.

What The Gang Of Four are saying (I say) is that every form of 'escapism' carries implicit political messages that shape people's attitudes and, basically, urge acceptance of the status quo. So that the statement "forget your troubles and have a good time" — which may be useful advice in specific circumstances — when elevated to being, say, the raison d'etre of rock'n'roll and repackaged as ideology, becomes the very means by which the troubles are perpetuated.

Analyse, debate, struggle, change. These are the constituents of The Gang Of Four's approach. The point is not to construct your music from bits of the accepted ideology but to make provocative entertainment from a consistent questioning of those ideas. The great achievement of 'Entertainment!' is that this approach is embodied in music that is exciting to hear and lyrics that brilliantly condense awareness of complex social relations. The result demonstrates the feasibility of a new way of writing rock'n'roll. After 'Entertainment!', everything else is nursery rhymes.

The album is not perfect, of course, but its flaws show the extent to which The Gang Of Four have developed. The re-recorded versions of 'Damaged Goods' and 'Anthrax' show a strength absent from the originals; while recent songs like 'Natural's Not In It', 'Not Great Men' and 'Contract' have a musical subtlety and lyrical clearness not always evident in earlier work. 'Return The Gift', for example, seems incomprehensible to me.

King explains. "It came from a magazine advert where you sent off for a Complete Works Of Shakespeare and they sent you a bronze-style medal of him — 'yours to keep in any case' sort of thing. They *give* you that which inflicts on you an emotional obligation to buy. So the song is, we'll send you all these things that maybe you don't even want but you're persuaded that you do cos you're told they'll make you happy.

"The lyrics aren't clear enough, they're the most difficult on the album. But the key is in the title which says SEND IT BACK."

And what about 'I Found That Essence Rare'?

King: "The idea is that the things you aspire to, you'll get cos, in a sense, you're offered things they know you're capable of getting. There's no point in marketing something which is unattainable. They market something that's slightly out of people's pockets so that you'll always be in debt. 'Essence Rare' is the name of a perfume."

Obscurity is the one serious criticism levelled at The Gang Of Four. King agrees it *has been* a fair complaint. 'I think the songs are getting clearer now. One of the problems of writing is finding the clearest most appropriate means of expressing ideas which are often complicated. I think one of the most successful songs is 'Natural's Not In It' which might be difficult but I don't think is obscure."

In fact, a few lines from the song perfectly encapsulate what I'd say were The Gang Of Four's main areas of concern: *Fornication makes you happy / No escape from society / Natural is not in it / Your relations are of power / We all have good intentions / But all with strings attached'.*

King continues. "That's the borderline, not to be afraid of being difficult but . . . well, 'Return The Gift' is too obscure but others, like 'Guns Before Butter' are pretty clear."

'Guns Before Butter' refers to Goering's statement "Iron always makes a country strong, butter and lard only make people fat" which John Heartfield later incorporated into one of his collages.

King again. "We were using that quote as a springboard for ideas about militarism. Siouxsie used the collage for 'Metal Postcard' but she used it in a voyeuristic, silly way cos I don't think she's that . . . well, John Heartfield would turn in his grave if he knew she was using his images cos he was a very committed

artist.

"He was fantastic. He used those ideas in a very clear way, a way that was good to look at but that was also very serious and had meaning. And that's really what we're trying to do."

Philadelphia Meets Economic Circumstances

FIFTEEN miles out of Boston, on their way to Philadelphia, The Gang Of Four's van breaks down for the umpteenth and last time. They phone the promoter who's handling the Philly gig and he says "it's OK boys, I'll send someone to get you." Five hours later a very stoned hippy turns up in an old camper.

Hugo sighs. "By the time we got to Philadelphia, it was closed."

. . . "ha ha ha that Hugo is really something ELSE, eh fun-lovers! But now it's time to meet his PARTNER in CRIME, the other half of that DYNAMIC DUO of rhythmic rockers, Mr BASS MAN himself, DAVE ALLEN. Dave's story, folks, is that of a HUMBLE North Country lad who CATAPAULTED to STARDOM. But Dave is still an ORDINARY BLOKE at HEART who likes to SINK a few JARS at the LOCAL, read CONAN THE BARBARIAN comix and generally P–A–A–A–R–T–Y!". . .

THE CORPSE IS A NEW PERSONALITY
"They use it against you.
Like Irish jokes on the BBC"

Item for discussion: the inner sleeve of 'Entertainment!' One side has the lyrics, the other an apparently random collection of photographs from TV programmes surrounded by Establishment slogans like "The facts are presented neutrally so that the public can make up its own mind" and "People are given what they want". To me it smacks a little of art school radical chic. I fail to see its *purpose*.

Gill: "It's appropriate in the sense that a lot of the songs are concerned with received ideas. The premise is that people's ideology is received and conditioned through what they're taught — and television is a major teaching element in the way people's thought is constructed.

"So those photos, I took over a period of two days, almost at random, and then I put the ironic tags on them as a way of illustrating the ideas that the various images are putting forward and the way they affect and shape how people think."

I can see that that's the idea behind it, but I'm not sure it's been worked through rigorously enough to be expressed effectively. For instance, the slogan "However unsavoury, events are shown in a palatable way" appears to be a comment ON the other slogans yet is mixed up with them. And doesn't it contradict the beginning of the song '5.45' which emphasises the unsavoury on television?

King: "But the last line of '5.45' is *'guerilla war struggle is a new entertainment'*. I mean, you watch something like the assasination of Aldo Moro, which is where that song comes from, and immediately after that you'll have Princess Anne off on the HMS Britannia or something. And the whole presentation of it is a sort of trivialisation process.

"Things are mish-mashed together — like on the sleeve — a bit of culture, a bit of current affairs, until ultimately they come down to the same thing which is fleeting images on the screen that end up meaning absolutely nothing. Or nothing in terms of what they ought to mean. They end up presenting a supposedly neutral view of the world where nothing serious seems to happen."

But what about an event like the Mountbatten killing, which received saturation TV coverage because it was deemed 'serious'? It seemed like a deliberate media conspiracy to provoke outrage in people.

Gill: "I think that's the other side of the coin. Where important things are trivialised, so trivial things are made important. So there are hours of television about one person's death just because he was a member of the royal family. It's the television's distorted value system. And a remnant of the idea that the royal family is related to God."

Burnham: "They manufacture this complete outrage . . . and people go along with it, for whatever reason. There were eighteen soldiers killed on the same day and that was hardly mentioned. And so people don't feel the same way about the soldiers and ordinary people who're being killed on the streets of Derry every day.

"And there's this whole thing about 'The Northern Ireland Troubles'. It's not 'Troubles', it's a fucking war. But they play that down."

Allen: "How many people even remember there's a war going on in Northern Ireland? They remember when someone like Mountbatten is killed but they'll forget again in a few weeks cos they just don't know what's really going on."

Gill: "And that's down to the way it's presented on TV and in the newspapers. They'll spend hours and hours on a state funeral but they won't *explain* anything about Ireland. They won't tell you *why* it happened."

King: "Going back to the inner sleeve, it's a banal set of images but it's a reflection of the fact that your prime source of information — the TV — is a purveyor of banality. It doesn't encourage thought."

Isn't there a contradiction within '5.45' between the gut response in the first lines and the assertion of banality at the end?

Gill: "The contradiction is between the way they present things, like 'the corpse is a new personality', and an honest reaction to it, which is often 'good grief, that's terrible'.

"Can I put the kettle on?"

Chairman Mao and Seymour Stein Discuss Economic Circumstances

ON THE West Coast, The Gang Of Four find their name attracting *heavy* attention. They are approached by a group of Maoists who demand to know their position on China.

"They were deadly serious," laughs Jon. "They told us they had a song entitled 'Dedicated To The Glorious Memory Of The Heroic Deeds Of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung'. I think they came from Los Angeles."

A chance encounter in Chicago leaves The Gang less than enamoured with The Clash. There are mutters of superstar trips and suchlike.

Jon: "They've got a big advertising campaign over there based on the slogan 'The Clash — The Only Group That Counts'. That just makes me sick."

On tour, The Gang Of Four are approached by several American record companies who express interest in the band.

Hugo: "But whether they were 90% interested or only 10% it was impossible to say."

John: "We did hear a great quote from Seymour Stein. 'The Gang Of Four are a political band — don't touch 'em'."

Hugo: "Well that's alright cos I wouldn't want to touch him."

. . . "hey hey hey fun-lovers, are WE having a GOOD TIME! I guess you've SUSSED by now just WHAT a FROLICSOME FOURSOME The Fang Of Gore are! With me now is lead guitarist ANDY GILL whose jittery, jarring, absolutely ZANY guitar sounds are a SEMINAL factor in the utterly TODAY ambience achieved by the queasy quartet. Andy, who's wearing a long grey overcoat, which it's rumoured he NEVER takes off!!!, is looking HAGGARD and EXHAUSTED. Hope you haven't been reading too many BOOKS, Andy! Andy is an EX-STUDENT, folks, and we all know that THINKING can DAMAGE your health, ha ha! Stay tuned and I'll be asking Andy when was the LAST time he FELL in LOVE!". . .

CARS! GIRLS! SURFING! HIGH SCHOOL! DRUGS! THE CLASH!
"This heaven gives me migraine"

Item for discussion: 'pure and simple' sucks. That The Gang Of Four have called their record 'Entertainment!' is an ironic riposte to those people who apparently think that culture exists (or should exist) in a social void, utterly unconnected with the processes of everyday life. The argument is not just that politics can be fun but that fun is another form of politics. Neither music nor fun can ever be 'pure and simple'. Even to select a word like 'entertainment' to designate a particular set of social relationships is itself a political act. 'Entertainment!' destroys once and for all the old notion that rock'n'roll is not a suitable medium for sophisticated political debate; while The Gang Of Four live are an exhilarating refutation of the claim that 'political' bands can't be 'entertaining'.

King: "Anyone who comes to our gigs can dance for 45 minutes if they want. But they can also get ideas thrown at them. Musical ideas too. The lyrics are no *more* radical than the way the songs are constructed or the way we behave. Hopefully they're all as radical as each other. And it's all entertaining, but it's interesting as well."

Allen: "We aren't trying to stuff things down people's throats. It's just that there are more things in the world than fucking women and cars."

King: "It's the difference between escapism and trying to make some sort of comment on the problems that affect everybody. I mean, the only problem that seems to bother a band like Squeeze is whether they get a lob on that night.

"But there are so many things that make people unhappy or dissatisfied with their lives and they're worth discussing, worth creating a debate about."

Allen: "What we've always said is that we're in a responsible situation as a band, because people do *listen* to what you say."

Burnham: "But 'Responsibility!' didn't sound like a very good name for an album title."

There still seem to be an awful lot of people who believe that rock 'n' roll should only be about cars, girls and fun, fun, fun. Doesn't that make it difficult to use for explicitly political statements?

Burnham: "That view of rock is so naive. Why perpetuate that?"

Gill: "Do you think that means it's a redundant category forever?"

No, but it must make it more difficult for you to be heard because people are already so prejudiced about what they think they ought to be hearing.

King: "In a way that makes things easier, cos it's so easy to insult people through the medium. Take the BBC and 'Tourist': they took incredible exception to that considering the sort of lyric they do allow on *TOTP*, and all the simulated orgasms they allow. The outrage they felt shows just how easy it is to kick a category up the arse."

Allen: "The number one that week was 'Ring My Bell', and Squeeze's 'Give The Dog A Bone' was in the charts too. All that nudge nudge wink wink side to sex is acceptable on *TOTP* but a straight mention of contraceptives freaked them out."

(To recap. The BBC objected to the word 'rubbers' from the 'Tourist' single. The group agreed to substitute 'packets' which they thought retained the essential meaning of the lyric. The BBC then objected to 'packets' and insisted that the word 'rubbish' be used instead. As this made complete nonsense of the line, the band refused and walked out of TOTP.)

King: "What was interesting was that TOTP can't cope with *anything* different. We wanted to put the drums at the front, but the director took exception to that. You know, *he* was the director, it was *his* show, and *we* had no right to say anything. He actually said to us 'you need us more than we need you'."

Allen: "We couldn't even do our stage show. Like, Andy and I move around and Jon switches mikes but they wanted us to stand still for ages so they could mess around with split screen stuff and special camera angles."

King: "At the end, the director said to Rob (Warr, Gang Of Four manager): 'I *don't* like the band; I *don't* like their single, and I *don't* like their attitude'."

Gill: "To come back to the question, having a rock 'n' roll tradition and its connotations actually makes it easier to write *critical* lyrics."

King: "The problem is that people associate politics with boredom. But it's fun. I think The Sex Pistols were political. Like 'God Save The Queen' — that was fun, but it said something pretty acute at the time."

How would you describe your politics?

King: "I'd say we were all socialists. None of us are in a party of any sort. I'm not sure what you mean."

Allen: "We're not raving Commies like Dave McCullough tried to make out."

Gill: "Saying we're socialists doesn't actually get us anywhere . . . there're so many varieties."

King: "I think we tend to look at a situation on its own merits. If you look at a problem like the oppression of women, or some specific part of that, then we try and create a debate towards a progressive solution — which would be people's emancipation from that sort of oppression. Like, 'It's Her Factory' tries to examine the idea that a home is a factory."

Gill: "There are several ways a band which could be tagged 'socialist' can put across an idea. Some involve cliches, some needn't. That band we played with at the Rock Against Sexism gig, The Spoilsports, to be honest they were using a lot of musical cliches — working in a completely established mode and just inserting socialist lyrics, which is a bit incongruous."

How did you first become involved with fighting sexism?

Burnham: "There wasn't a day when we saw the light and realised sexism was bad."

King: "No, it's like we've always been involved. There was a strong women's group in Leeds and even at the university, when Andy Corrigan (of The Mekons) and I were heavily involved in the film society, we were putting on benefits for them and running weekends of feminist films. That was years ago, before The Gang Of Four or The Mekons. I mean, just everyone up there was involved in that sort of activity."

Yeah, it was like that in Lancaster but come to London and you find a lot of people, especially men and especially in the music biz, who either aren't aware of sexism or don't consider it an issue.

Burnham: "Hence the usefulness of a band like us, an all-male band, becoming involved in RAS — which is still seen by a lot of people as 'oh, just a load of lesbian bands'."

King: "It shows that RAS isn't just an organisation for women. It's people who are opposed to one section of the community treating another section of the community badly. Men treating women like shit. But fighting that doesn't exclude men.

"What we tried to show by playing that RAS gig is that maybe you can work out a form of rock music that isn't oppressive."

And thus the critical analyses of standard notions about love and romance in your songs?

Allen: "All the songs take people's preconceptions, and the way they treat each other, and try to be critical about it."

Gill: "It's back to what we were just saying. Rock 'n' roll's a set of categories and ideas which it reuses in different variations — the same formulae rearranged endlessly. And the spoken bit in 'Antrhax' tends to be a swipe at everybody, but it's fair enough, cos everyone from Bob Dylan to The Buzzcocks, Elvis Presley to Jimi Hendrix, has invariably presented a certain formula to do with relationships between men and women.

"And in 'Anthrax', and other songs like 'Contract' and 'Damaged Goods', there's an attempt to stand back and look at that. To see what these ideas that are accepted are actually saying."

Burnham: "We really called the album 'Entertainment!' cos we're going for a new direction. We're gonna sing about cars and girls and surfing and high school and drugs, just like The Clash do."

You were saying that it's necessary to examine every aspect of what you play. How do you see the music itself developing?

Gill: "I'd like to see it get less rigid, the songs less formulated. Most songs we play the same way each time and I'd like to see that change but I'm not sure how at the moment. There are a few things, like different vocals,

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that we're beginning to do."

King: "I think we'll move away from rock music more."

Gill: "And there'll be less of this starting somewhere, ending somewhere, and having a constant beat in between."

King: "Like 'Contract' and 'Not Great Men' have more of a *feel*. I think 'Contract' has subtleties which are quite exciting. That nice bass line, then the alternating guitar and bass, and then bass and drums. These aspects of reduction rather than layering are what I like."

Reduction?

King: "There's an essential difference between a song like 'Essence Rare', which is layered — things just built on each other — and 'Contract' which is reduced or subtracted — things going in and out of each other. It's not so much like being hit over the head with a hammer. More jazzy."

Burnham: "Soft Machine, watch out."

Economic Circumstances Can't Afford A Haircut

AT ONE of the American gigs which they play with The Buzzcocks, The Gang Of Four learn that the promoter is . . . reluctant . . . to pay the bands. Their manager Rob Warr and The Buzzcocks' manager Richard Boon go to talk with him but he locks himself in his office and refuses to see them. They are obliged to kick the door down. They get their money.

Dave explains: "The thing is, when you're touring on your own, you need the money every night to pay for your hotel bill and a meal. Cos you've got no-one else to stand guarantee."

The Gang Of Four have no record deal in America and so they finance the tour themselves. The band, the manager, the two roadies and the equipment spend a month vanning around Canada and the USA. They drive from New York to Boston to Philadelphia to Toronto to Buffalo to Cleveland back to Boston and New York and Philadelphia then to Washington to Toronto (again) to Chicago to Minneapolis to San Francisco and to Los Angeles. Twice they have to train it, and twice fly, when the van breaks down.

Jol, their roadie, is arrested twice. Once because the van has no license plates, and once for speeding. These offences cost the band about £50 in fines and bail.

On their American tour, The Gang Of Four pay themselves £30 a week plus £5 per day for meals and immediate expenses. At the end of the four weeks they are relieved to find they've made an overall profit on the tour of £2.50.

While they are in the States they meet a woman who is employed to cut the hair of a well-known old-wave English rock star. For this she is paid £400 a week.

. . . "well ROCK 'N' ROLLERS, time is running out for another week but before we go, let's have a few words from The Fang Of Gore's YUMMY lead singer JON KING. Jon, who's PALE and INTENSE with DARK CURLY hair — hope you're LISTENING girls! — is an absolute WHIRLWIND of ENERGY on stage, flailing about ALL OVER the place! Well Jon, there're some RILLY important questions I'd just LOVE to ask, like which FOOTBALL team d'ya support?!, but I'm AFRAID the CLOCK'S beaten us. DON'T forget to tune in again NEXT week, FUN-LOVERS, when I'll be talking to HEAVY new band TORY POLICIES who want to RESTRICT abortion, have CONTROVERSIAL opinions about what to do with COLOURED immigrants and RILLY know how to KICK ASS!!!!!!" . . .

ALL RECORD COMPANIES ARE PAPER TIGERS

"We all have good intentions (she said she was ambitious)
but all with strings attached (so she accepts the process)".

Item for discussion: EMI. On the sleeve of the 'Damaged Goods' EP, there's a photo of a matador and a bull. The matador is saying "You know, we're both in the entertainment business, we have to give the audience what they want. I don't like to do this but I can double the amount I'd get if I were in a 9 to 5 job." The bull replies, "I think that at some point we have to take responsibility for our actions."

When I heard that The Gang Of Four had signed to EMI I was very disappointed. Though I had (and have) no clear idea of what else is possible, I still think it a shame that sooner or later any group with radical leanings seems to get sucked into the mainstream of capitalist enterprise. So why sign with EMI?

Allen: "They needed a good band!

"No, we would have remained with Fast but Bob Last couldn't have done any more for us. It's very difficult to put out records on a small label because they don't have the back up. So if you're into mass communication and want efficient distribution, you have to sign with a big company. I suppose we could have gone to Rough Trade or somebody like that, but they were never really interested."

Burnham: "It's just that from EMI we got a contract that suited us, which allowed us the autonomy we wanted and which we felt we could operate within."

(The Gang Of Four produced 'Tourist' and 'Entertainment!' themselves. They design their own album sleeves, posters, press ads and badges. They appear to have total control over their music and its promotion).

Nevertheless, your profits are going towards shoring up a capitalist industry which stands for all the things you oppose.

King: "But that would be the same if we were on Fast or Rough Trade or any record company."

Well, Rough Trade don't have an arms division manufacturing guns.

King: "Neither do EMI Music. They're nothing to do with EMI arms now. The department was sold to another company just after we signed."

Gill: "That's not the point. I mean, even if we signed with Rough Trade . . ."

Burnham: ". . . yeah, who do they bank with?"

Gill: ". . . no, no, I mean, there are several groups on Rough Trade whose attitude I wouldn't endorse in the slightest. When you sign with a company, you're basically using them for what they've got to offer you."

But EMI are using you too.

King: "So would Rough Trade. They're the Virgin of tomorrow. I don't think there's any difference between the small business man and the big business man. They're all in it for the same ends."

Gill: "Well, I'm not sure if they are or not."

The point is that if no groups take the risk and try to establish an alternative, then the big companies are always going to hold a monopoly over efficient distribution and suchlike.

Burnham: "I think we're being a bit defensive. In a sense you're right, maybe in some respects we could have 'done better' or whatever."

King: "But there are other problems apart from the question of idealism. You get to the point where you can't be on social security any more cos your photo's on the front page of the papers — which happened to Dave. He walked into the SS office and they slapped the *NME* down in front of him and said, 'who's this then?'

"So you've gotta earn a living and you can't do that playing gigs. You're lucky if you break even. And you have to pay people's wages. There are eight of us, we all have a say in group decisions and we all get paid the same. Well, seven of us — the band, the manager and the roadies — earn £30 a week, and our P.R. person gets £50. That's a wage bill of £260 a week we've got to find — just for people to live on — and £30 a week's not excessive. Even on tour, when the band get an extra £5 a day and the roadies get £60 a week plus £5 a day, we're not exactly overpaid.

"And on a practical level, there's no small company who can pay you £15,000 a year just on wages. And that's before you've paid for equipment, PA hire, flight cases — all the things which are necessary for what you do. You've got to have someone who can pay you the money to survive or the band couldn't even exist.

"The Mekons are in the same position. They tried to hold out for as long as they could and now they've signed to Virgin. They can still only afford to pay themselves £22 a week. And if they'd had to go out and find jobs, which was the only alternative, then The Mekons would not exist now. So what do they do?"

Gill: "It's down to what you believe is right. The premise you're talking about is that you can set up an alternative 'record industry' and that that's a good thing. But I'm dubious about it. What's the point of having an isolated bit of alternative industry in a sea of monopoly capitalism? What does that gain?"

Well, what's the point of having an isolated bit of political music in a sea of pop banality? I mean, the point is to examine the possibilities for change and hope some of them will develop in a radical direction.

King: "But you'd still be using the EMI or RCA pressing plants, you'd still be going out through the same shops. I think people have too high an expectation of bands. There comes a point when practicality has to combine with your ideals. And we want to get over to as many people as possible."

Gill: "I think that's a pretty weak argument. Get over *what?* And *why?* And to *how many* people? As for practicality, if you decide it *is* important who you sign for, and it *is* important to be on a small label, then perhaps you do have to get a job as well and play to a small audience. Perhaps it means you *choose* to suffer a small scale of operation.

"We've chosen to work on a large scale, cos that's what we wanted to do. Though I suppose I'd have to say in the end that, personally, I don't really know . . ."

King: "There are always contradictions. All we can do is take responsibility for what we *do*. And that's difficult enough. For example, we did the album, the production, the art work; we're going on tour, designing the press ads; then we have to write new songs. Just to get a two week holiday this year has been a major effort."

Allen: "It's not a case of sign with EMI, get lots of money and settle down to an easier life. We're doing more work now than we've ever done."

Well, maybe they'll use that to wear you down. If you can't cope you'll have to give away areas of control and then they'll have you hooked.

King: "No, cos I don't think anyone's in this

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THE DAMNED

Smash it up

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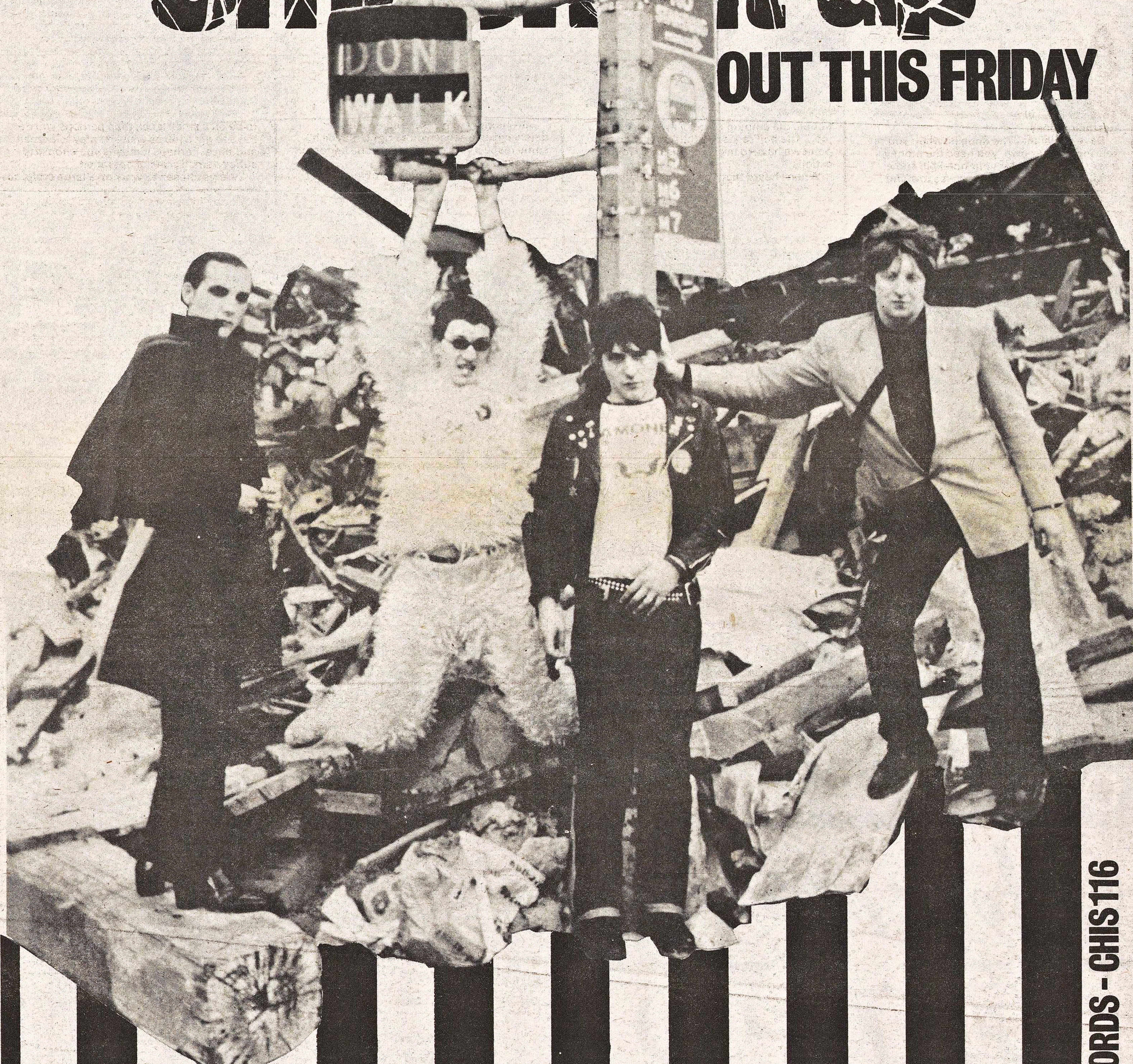

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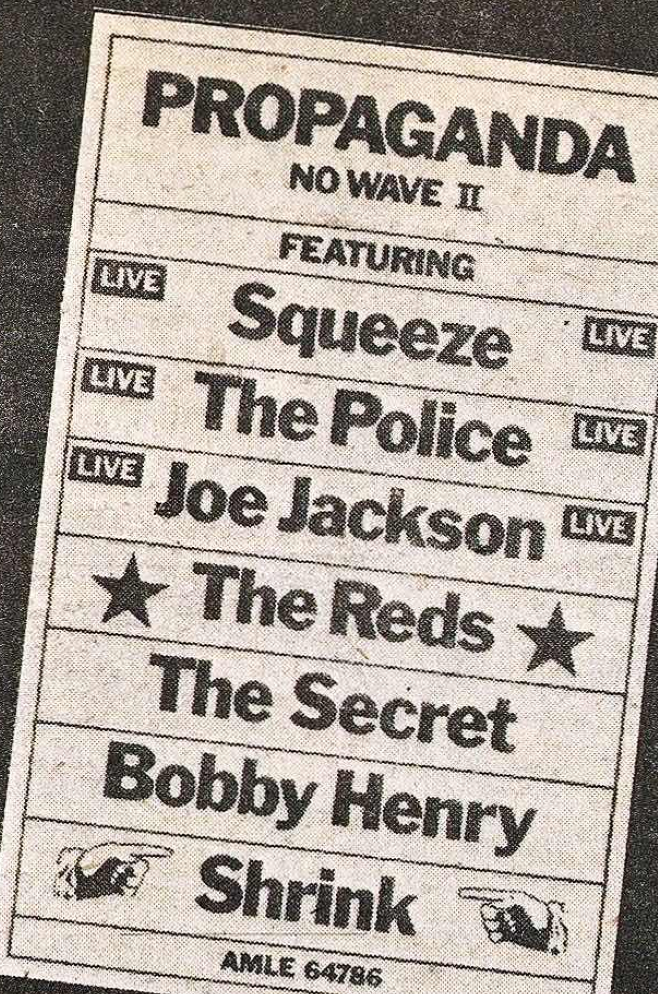

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OUR PRICE TOP 60

LONDON'S ORIGINAL ALBUM CHART

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	R.R.P.	OUR PRICE
1	1	THE POLICE — REGGATTA DE BLANC	4.99	3.74
2	3	EAGLES — THE LONG RUN	5.00	3.75
3	2	BLONDIE — EAT TO THE BEAT	4.99	3.74
4	4	STRANGLERS — THE RAVEN	4.99	3.74
5	7	GARY NUMAN — THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE	5.00	3.75
6	6	POLICE — OUTLANDOS D'AMOUR	4.99	3.74
7	5	BOB DYLAN — SLOW TRAIN COMING	5.29	4.04
8	NEW ENTRY	MICHAEL JACKSON — OFF THE WALL	4.99	3.74
9	11	SUPERTRAMP — BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	4.99	3.74
10	8	BONEY M — OCEANS OF FANTASY	5.00	3.75
11	9	LED ZEPPELIN — IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR	5.00	3.75
12	10	CRUSADERS — STREET LIFE	4.69	3.44
13	17	JETHRO TULL — STORMWATCH	4.99	3.74
14	16	JUDAS PRIEST — UNLEASHED IN THE EAST	4.99	3.74
15	12	VAN MORRISON — INTO THE MUSIC	4.65	3.40
16	14	EARTH, WIND AND FIRE — I AM	5.29	4.04
17	13	E.L.O. — DISCOVERY	5.49	4.24
18	35	WIRE — 154	5.29	4.04
19	37	RAINBOW — DOWN TO EARTH	5.06	3.81
20	NEW ENTRY	BOB MARLEY — SURVIVAL	5.69	4.44
21	29	RICKI LEE JONES	5.00	3.75
22	27	JUDY TZUKE — WELCOME TO THE CRUISE	4.65	3.40
23	26	RY COODER — BOP TILL YOU DROP	5.00	3.75
24	19	JOE JACKSON — I'M THE MAN	4.99	3.74
25	30	10cc — GREATEST HITS	4.99	4.19
26	15	SLITS — CUT	5.69	4.44
27	20	COMMODORES — MIDNIGHT MAGIC	5.69	4.44
28	22	FRANK ZAPPA — JOE'S GARAGE	5.29	4.04
29	23	CLIFF RICHARD — ROCK 'N' ROLL JUVENILE	5.29	4.04
30	NEW ENTRY	BARRY MANILOW — ONE VOICE	5.00	3.75
31	24	SPYRO-GYRA — MORNING DANCE	4.69	3.44
32	21	TUBEWAY ARMY — REPLICAS	5.00	3.75
33	33	RANDY CRAWFORD — RAW SILK	5.00	3.75
34	50	ROXY MUSIC — MANIFESTO	5.31	4.06
35	32	BUZZCOCKS — A DIFFERENT KIND OF TENSION	4.99	3.74
36	36	ELKIE BROOKS — LIVE AND LEARN	4.99	3.74
37	28	TALKING HEADS — FEAR OF MUSIC	5.00	3.75
38	40	BRAND X — PRODUCT	4.65	3.40
39	31	CHEAP TRICK — DREAM POLICE	4.99	3.74
40	39	BLONDIE — PARALLEL LINES	4.99	3.74
41	42	J.J. CALE — 5	5.69	4.44
42	38	DONNA SUMMER — BAD GIRLS	6.50	4.75
43	41	JOAN ARMATRADING — STEPPIN' OUT	4.99	3.74
44	18	QUADROPHENIA	7.50	5.75
45	25	SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES — JOIN HANDS	5.06	3.81
46	53	DAVE EDMUNDS — REPEAT WHEN NECESSARY	5.00	3.75
47	NEW ENTRY	THE PIRATES — HAPPY BIRTHDAY ROCK'N'ROLL	4.50	3.25
48	34	WHITESNAKE — LOVE HUNTER	4.99	3.74
49	47	ALAN PARSONS PROJECT — EVE	5.00	3.75
50	51	BOB DYLAN — AT BUDOKAN	7.99	5.49
51	45	JOE JACKSON — LOOK SHARP!	4.99	3.74
52	43	THE BEST DISCO ALBUM IN THE WORLD	5.00	4.20
53	44	SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY — THE JUKES	4.65	3.40
54	48	LEO SAYER — HERE	4.99	3.74
55	54	NILS LOFGREN — NILS	4.99	3.74
56	59	SKY	5.25	4.00
57	46	FOREIGNER — HEAD GAMES	5.00	3.75
58	52	SAMMY HAGAR — STREET MACHINE	5.29	4.04
59	60	CHRIS RAINBOW — WHITE TRAILS	5.29	4.04
60	58	DARTS — DART ATTACK	5.29	4.04

Forthcoming Attractions

Gang of Four, Motorhead, Robin Trower, Specials, Fleetwood Mac, Merton Parkas, Abba, Santana, Dr. Feelgood, The Jam, Bee Gees, Status Quo, Elton John, Boomtown Rats, U.K. Subs, Camel, Spyro Gyra, Styx Hooper.

E & O E
Prices Subject to manufacturers increases

THRILLS

Pistols' LP Session Sensation

Cook shows how to achieve that strangled cat guitar sound. Pic: Dennis Morris

Nick Kent sees Steve Jones on overdub

WHAT WITH all the furor a couple of months back concerning The Sex Pistols' rejuvenation with Jimmy Pursey at the helm, and its ultimate abrupt collapse, you could hardly blame the rock rags for getting well cheesed off by the very name "Sex Pistols" and stifling a yawn whenever said handle was brought up.

The Pistols — or Steve Jones and Paul Cook as they're known to their kinfolk — did not appear to have any masterplan up their sleeves after this abortive venture so it was with a certain hint of the blase that an NME writer chanced upon a much slimmed-down Steve Jones last week. Talk was amiable and strafed with the usual unintentionally humorous remarks from Jones.

He and Cook, he told, had located a new manager in one Fachtna O'Kelly, the Boomtown Rats' supremo, who was "an alright geezer — for a paddy!", whilst activities in the musical area had been kept simply to rehearsing. An invitation to hear "some of the songs" ended up with our unsuspecting scribe accompanying Jones and Cook to Little Venice in London's canal region where a barge, one of the two owned by Virgin boss Richard Branson, had been converted into an extremely pleasant 16-track studio.

It was here that Jones and Cook set up their gear with the help of two long-haired types whom I took immediately for roadies. The name of a third partner-in-crime — referred to as "Andy" who "played bass" with the pair — was constantly being mentioned until I realised that the roadie-lookalike with ginger hair halfway down his back and a manic face was, in fact, the bassist in question.

As soon as such matters as tuning and attaining the correct frequency for each instrument were attended to, the three-piece set to work in remarkably perfunctory fashion.

The first track established the pattern of Pistols' studio workmanship. Messrs. Jones, Cook and Andy Arthur ("a mate from the old Speakeasy days" — the hirsute bassist is also the guitarist for The Lightin' Raiders) simply laid down the basic track in no more than two takes — one was the norm, in fact — after which Jones would be left alone in the studio to lay down the guitar overdubs.

These overdubs, starting with the first track 'Rockin' Mick' — "about this Ted we know," muttered Cook — where Jones simply beefed up the rhythm thrust with a "Wall of Sound" layer of three or more guitars, started getting beefier and more fearsome with the second cut, 'Madhouse', and finally reached a plateau of thickly inspired chord progressions / hookline motifs / descending / ascending riffs that made a song like 'Another Dream' or 'Kamikaze' positively adventurous.

As the night progressed Jones just seemed to get better and better.

"There's no stopping the boy!" muttered Cook. "This is what he lives for — playing the guitar, doing the overdubs, hearing them and being told how good he is."

Meanwhile, on the other side of the glass, Jones is throwing himself around arching his back to throw out another brace of power-chords as the fourth overdub to 'Skull And Crossbones', a fairly complex hard rock construction in the Thin Lizzy mould.

Of a projected twelve or thirteen cuts at least nine are well in gear with originals like 'Rocking' Mick', 'Madhouse', 'Another Dream', 'Kamikaze' and 'Skull And Crossbones' still to be added to.

Two non-originals are also projected, The Ronettes' 'Do I Love You' and an obscure George McRae number.

Amidst all this positivism two problems lurk. Lyrics, for one (primarily the work of a bashful Cook) need a definite tending-to, whilst the band obviously need another guitarist to tackle their material live.

But the essentials are there. Jones has developed a strong voice that owes a debt to scarcely anyone and the basic muscle of the songs makes for grade-A hard rock.

Financially, Cook and Jones are still suffering from the legal situation that placed their respective booties in the hands of The Official Receiver — a shady-sounding bunch whom the pair regard with something less than fondness, due mainly to the body in question's unrelenting stickliness in doling out a reasonable cash-flow.

Nor are the pair over-enamoured with Virgin still squeezing their back catalogue for all it's worth.

Meanwhile, though, Steve Jones is whipping out his fourth overdub on 'Kamikaze', parrying a dagger-sharp five note motif against the bank of chords and thrashing.

The album should be ready soon and . . . well, we'll just see how it's greeted by all the parties involved.

"Just tell 'em we won't be charging seven and a half quid for it," mutters Jones.

NICK KENT

THRILLS

EMI SLUMP

(Black arm-bands all round, please)

EMI Records last week announced that in the second half of their financial year that ended last June 30 they suffered a £14.6 million pound loss. This massive deficit has resulted in total annual profits only reaching £1.9 millions compared with the previous year's figures of £16.8 millions.

Though company spokesmen may put the blame for this staggering downswing in profits on a 22 per cent drop in record sales sources within the company have for long voiced the standard tales one hears from within vast corporations all over the world of mismanagement, muddle and ineptitude. Or, as one vocal executive puts it: "The boys in the chauffeur-driven Granadas have fucked up."

As another of his colleagues

■ *Continues over*

Sydney Bidwell, MP

In our report "One More Victim of the Southall Riot" published on May 5th 1979, we made an incorrect reference to local Labour M.P., Sydney Bidwell. We have been asked to point out that Mr Bidwell was approached by many people at the demonstration, but he did not have anyone charged with assault. We apologise for any embarrassment our report may have caused Mr. Bidwell.

STRANGLED!

Intrepid Girl Newshound Escapes From 'Men In Black' Desert Peril.

AS Jean Jacques Burnel said it was an obvious ploy to throw a female journalist into the midst of The Stranglers, renowned as they are for their sexist attitudes, arrogant, abusive behaviour and aggressive pernicious tendencies. Tales of kidnappings and molestations of journalists in the past filled my head.

But The Stranglers seemed far too busy during their recent, brief visit to Portugal, to indulge in similar churlish pranks. They were making a promotional film for their latest single, 'Nuclear Device', taken from 'The Raven' album. They had only two days in which to complete it so I had few qualms about joining them for a couple of hours.

They were suspiciously pleased to see me, though. Jean Jacques' face lit up with childlike mischievousness as he beckoned to Hugh Cornwell and my escort, one of their soundmen, to follow him into the van. There they began discussing something excitedly, with constant brief looks and beams to me through the window, before they piled out again to continue filming.

It seemed a bit odd to be making a film about the Australian outback in Portugal, but they had found the perfect natural setting. It was a small quarry miles off the beaten track, with a long sloping sandy back and a rocky, parched-looking floor, surrounded by tough, wiry scrubland and withered bracken and deadwood.

The song, 'Nuclear Device', is The Stranglers' critical and vehement expose of the dictatorial premier of Queensland, Australia. He, it seems, is striving to buy up the cheap desert land to mine for uranium, build nuclear power stations on, and ultimately turn it into a dangerous and alien experimental testing ground, with no regard for its inhabitants, namely desert animals and aborigines:

Dressed in khaki green knee-length baggy shorts, coarse shirts, scuffed heavy duty cobber boots, green felt bush hats with cork fly fringes and goggles, and carrying tin billy cans, pots and plates, Hugh Cornwell, Jean Jacques Burnel, Dave Greenfield and Jet Black looked right Bruces.

The film is a series of short sketches of The Stranglers in the desert, with one scene in which they find an aborigine and force him to dig for uranium. These Men of Rock appear on the lip of the quarry, a swaying, staggering line of beer sluggers with billy cans dangling between their extremely hairy (Hugh Cornwell's) to virtually hairless (Jet Black's) legs, and hurl sticks, stones and abuse at the hapless native citizen of Australia. Next seen clad in a shiny silver suit, the aborigine then discovers a beach ball intended to symbolise uranium (and, one assumes, the cosmic egg itself) and holds it fearfully above him, whilst the Bruces cheer and reel in drunken euphoria.

Though superficially it seems that the film is merely a collection of comic shots of The Stranglers, the story and the implications are actually frighteningly convincing.

'First and last men walk this earth/But only a few survive.' The words to 'Nuclear Device' blared out from the amplifier and I turned thoughtfully away as the four Bruces began yet again to sing and dance on a ridge of hard, baked sand, while the filmcrew prepared the next scene. It was time I went. I looked round for my escort.

Course, he'd gone, hadn't he? So engrossed had they been in keeping my attention, that I'd failed to notice the car pulling quietly away behind me. What japesters these Strangling fellows are.

I felt an overwhelming sense of panic. My plane left in an hour, escape was imperative, and the only other means of transport was the band's equipment van, which, conveniently, still had the ignition key in it. If only I'd accelerated a bit faster, and I hadn't been distracted by two unwilling screaming passengers I'd have got clean away.

The four Bruces applauded and danced excitedly (a bit more) in the background as I wandered off to brood over my fate. The Stranglers were going to Ireland the next day and there were no more available flights to England for three days.

It seemed an impossible situation. Suddenly though, I was confronted by a knight in shining armour — or rather a swarthy, surly-looking

■ *Continues over*

So this is what they'll be wearing in the Kings Road next week. Pic: Richard Young

EMI slump

■ From previous page

explained: "You've got a company that expanded into a conglomerate off the Beatles' earnings but even so basically the people running the board of EMI Ltd just have no taste for the music businness."

Although when the uncomfortable financial position first became known back in the summer Bob Mercer, the former managing director of EMI's GRD (Group Repertoire Division — there is also the LRD, the Licensed Repertoire Division, which all leads to twice as much confusion), was required to act as sacrificial lamb by being moved sideways to EMI Films the running of the EMI affairs is believed to have been gradually inproving for sometime now following the all-time low that hit the collective company spirit at the end of 1976 following Sir John Reid's decision to kick The Sex Pistols off the label.

Even before then, however, the activities of the A&R operation in the years 1975/77 had been stymied by the same out-of-touch board only permitting an investment in new acts that was ludicrously small when compared with the budget of other major companies.

Such lack of foresight came about by the delusions rendered by the musicians who had in the Sixties permitted EMI to take its great leap forward — The Beatles.

Up until 1975 it was the Beatles catalogue that paid the rent for EMI Records. Ludicrously high overheads and overstaffing were tolerated because every record sold in addition to the Beatles' material was pure profit.

In the summer's panic cutbacks 30 members of the company's sales force were pruned. Before this "rationalisation", however, the structure of EMI Records had meant that each individual record retailer was called on by *five* separate EMI sales reps. This compares with a maximum of two reps from any of the other English based companies.

The problem, therefore, is not just that EMI have been hard hit by so many less records being sold, but that they actually require so many records to be bought just to pay for the running of the EMI structure. Like so many other vast corporations, from British Leyland to the United States of America, they are being hit by the realisation that, sorry, folks, it just isn't working like that anymore. Didn't anyone ever tell you that if you went on expanding it would have to stop sometime.

This poignant reminder of the current perilous state of the world economy is rammed home with even greater force when we appreciate that the losses are not just in Britain alone but are related to EMI Records across the entire globe. In other words, everyone's screwing up.

And are any of us really surprised?

JAMES DOLLING

THRILLS

Stranglers

■ From previous page

Latin-type dressed in camouflage combat suit and cradling a rifle. He stared at me impassively, his face beaded with sweat, heavy, fat and emotionless. I wondered hopelessly if rape or murder was his bag.

He licked his lips, my heart skipped a beat, and he asked in slow, slurred, almost indecipherable English, where I wanted to go. I told him and he said he'd take me in his car, which was hidden nearby.

So which was it to be, gunman or Strangler? I reasoned that death by bullet was quicker than death by slow starvation tied to a tree in the middle of the Portuguese Australian desert (which I discovered afterwards had been my intended fate), so, without bidding farewell to my hosts, I beat a hasty retreat with my rifle-toting saviour.

Sixty minutes later I was sitting on the plane, which had been delayed ten minutes while I was rushed through customs. It wasn't until we were safely in the air, however, that I breathed a sigh of relief and allowed myself to reflect triumphantly on how I, a mere female (!) had outwitted The Stranglers.

Bet they felt right Bruces.

DEANNE PEARSON

Pic: Anette Weatherman

Little White Bull

"FRIDAY Night . . . Saturday Morning" (BBC2) last Friday night afforded a clear picture of elitist early Sixties thinking being shown up for its slumbering, slothful self by Jimmy Pursey.

Also present was Secret Affair's Ian Paige, who, though gruff with nerves, provided the Sham singer with a back-up voice and a foil on whom to sharpen the barbs he was deftly dealing the Establishment.

And it was very Establishment: the unctuous Ned Sherrin presenting, *Private Eye's* William Rushton and John Wells the talk show's protagonists, and Emma Soames, Arianna Stassinopoulos, and — earlier in the programme — Lady Antonia Fraser as The Gels.

From the start it was obvious that Sherrin in particular viewed the pair as joke figures, as slightly unclean, rather like *Private Eye* tends to treat rock music. For a while, though, there was banter about dress. "Lovely suit and tie . . . very bankruptcy." Jim dug at Ian in his natty two-tone job.

"This is very early Tommy Steele, it looks like," quipped Sherrin, who'd obviously been reading his *NME,* at JP's cut down denim apparel.

"I've got more than half a sixpence, though," shot back Pursey.

It was just after that that clever John Wells sensed a scoop. Pursey had just told how he'd given away £32,000 to bands under his wing and 23,000 records to his fans.

"Do the groups make a profit?" Bird demanded.

"Of course they do," replied JP.

"Where do the profits go back to?"

"The people that we make records for. Also, I do enjoy myself," went on Jim. "I buy clothes at the end of the week. It's like being a plumber or a writer for *Private Eye.*"

"Or a capitalist," snapped Wells peevishly.

"I think it's very easy to take the mickey," retorted Jim, "but less easy to do."

"It isn't easy," answered Wells, "I promise you, it's very hard."

Arianna Stassinopoulos leaned forward to inquire of our Jim why he always seems to anticipate hostility.

"Because there's something wrong with today's society."

DAVID FROST

THRILLS

The Police, Blair Peach

IN THE same week that a police widow clamoured for the re-introduction of hanging following the murder of her husband the Director of Public Prosecutions decided that there will be no prosecution over the New Zealand teacher Blair Peach who died from a head injury at the Southall Anti-National Front demo last April.

Sir Thomas Hetherington, Director of Public Prosecutions, said in a statement that he had given careful consideration to "allegations that a number of persons were assaulted by police officers on that occasion." He concluded, however: "The Director has decided that the available evidence is insufficient to justify any criminal proceedings in respect of this matter.

"The inquiries by the Metropolitan Police have been very thorough but if at a later stage further material evidence emerges, the Director will reconsider his decision."

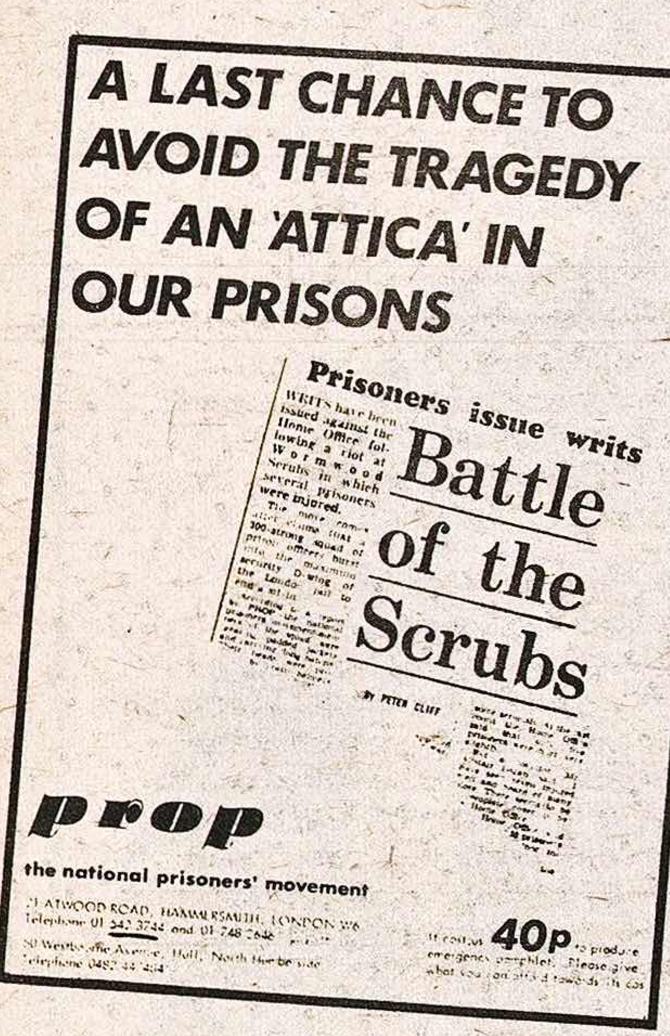
The same day the Labour Party's National Executive asked the Home Secretary to meet a delegation over the Director's decision. Said Labour MP Christopher Price: "When a man's been murdered the British public expects justice to be pursued."

Paul Holborow, national secretary of the Anti-Nazi Legue, commented: "I cannot say this decision surprises me because from very early on our fears were that there would be a cover-up."

An action in the civil courts for damages against the Metropolitan Police would "almost certainly go ahead," said the Peach family solicitor.

The Prisons, The Law

Prison Beatings



AN EMERGENCY pamphlet published by PROP, the national prisoners' movement, carries horrifying allegations of deliberate, systematic brutality carried out by the warders on the prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs' D Wing last August 31st.

It is maintained that an orderly, peaceful demonstration by prisoners complaining about increasingly restrictive conditions was broken up by an assault force of "170 to 200" warders that left 69 prisoners injured.

It also claims that a massive clamp down on information has prevented the news media from learning of the attack.

The pamphlet is available from PROP, 21 Atwood Road, London W6. Readers should note the message on the front cover: "It cost us 40p to produce this emergency pamphlet. Please give us what you can afford towards its cost."

And don't forget something for postage, too!

Sus Laws

AT THE Labour Party Conference last week party members heard that Mr John Fraser, MP for Norwood, is hoping to get a Private Member's Bill through at the next Parliament that will abolish the 1824 Vagrancy Act, the iniquitous "Sus" law.

Derek Reed (Lambeth Central) said that the law was used overwhelmingly against the black community: "In some areas a massive police presence is used to keep young blacks off the street."

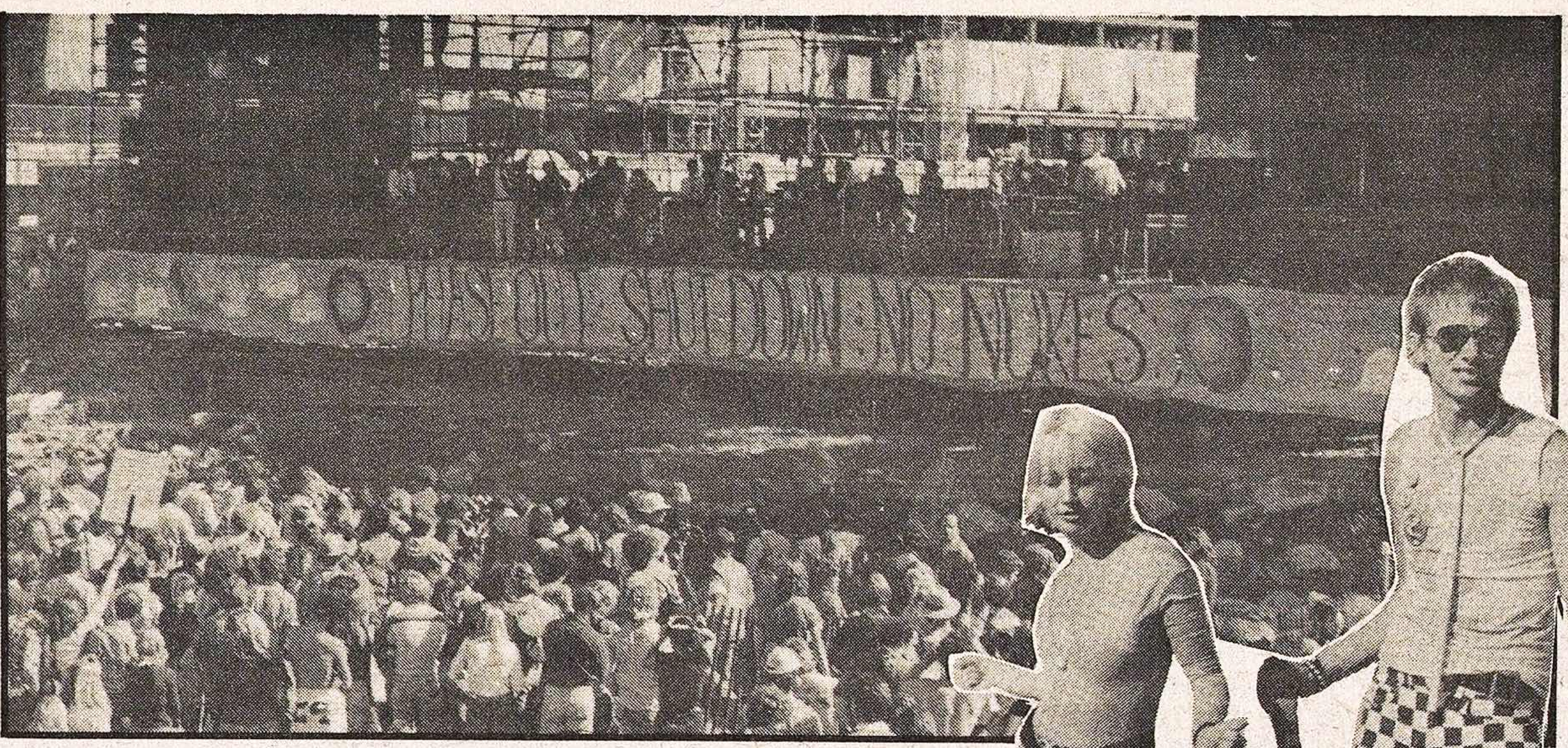
If the police were sincere in wanting better relations with the black community, said Joan Lester, MP for Eton and Slough, they should be advocating repeal themselves. The National Association of Probation Officers, she commented, had described the law as an "unfounded principle open to abuse in practice and thus contrary to natural justice."

If John Fraser's Bill is unsuccessful, she concluded, the next Labour Government should abolish the law.

We shall see.

Benyon

"Just because you weirdos don't want t'face the consequences of an inevitable nuclear disaster doesn't mean I might not want to —"



Right: Joy Ryder, Avis Davies. Both pics: Julie Scher

Anti-Nukes N.Y.

Big Blow-Out

MAYBE you're tired of reading about anti-nuke rallies, but hang on, because this was the big one.

New York Battery City Park was the scene for the largest Anti-nuke rally ever held in America, with well over two hundred thousand people in attendance.

The rally capped off a five night series of benefit concerts at Madison Square Gardens which reportedly netted a million dollars for the organisers, Musicians United For Safe Energy (MUSE). The money will be distributed to various anti-nuke organisations around the country.

The big attraction was performances by Jacksone Browne, Bonnie Raitt, John John Hall and Crosby, Stills and Nash. There were, of course, several speakers too. Political gadfly Ralph Nader reminded the crowd that whilst they were there, "General Electric isn't here, Kerr-McGee isn't here, Gulf And Western isn't here." Tom Hayden and Jone Fonda, fast becoming the Donny and Marie of left politics, spoke briefly, mostly thanking everyone for coming.

Then there was music. The token New Wave act on the bill, Joy Rider And Avis Davis, provided the most inspiring anthem, "No More Nukes" and also provided some visual relief from the drab folkie uniforms adhered to by the other musicians.

Backstage after their performance Avis Davis told *Thrills* "They've shied away from using New Wave acts so far because they want to build their credibility within an older established crowd. They did invite The Clash to play here, but they couldn't make it because of their tour schedule."

Gil Scott-Heron, also talking to the press backstage, noted that, "This nuclear energy issue isn't a great priority in many black and Third World communities yet. But it's still got a long way to go in white communities too, so we're all behind."

The crowd's make-up, young, middle class, white, bore him out.

Bonnie Raitt sang, John Hall sang. Jesse Colin sang, "Get together". Jackson Browne sang his old faves but not his new "disco apocalypse", having realised at the Garden shows that just mentioning "disco" is enough to provoke audience hostility.

But to the crowd, the real big deal was Crosby, Stills and Nash.

This despite the fact that Stills looked balder than ever, that Crosby looked evermore like an overweight walrus with a droopy mustache. They sang 'Please Come to Chicago' to set the proper political mood, and then a few more you could've heard ten years ago at Woodstock.

But if the music wasn't quite thrilling, the size of the crowd was.

RICHARD GRABEL

THRILLS

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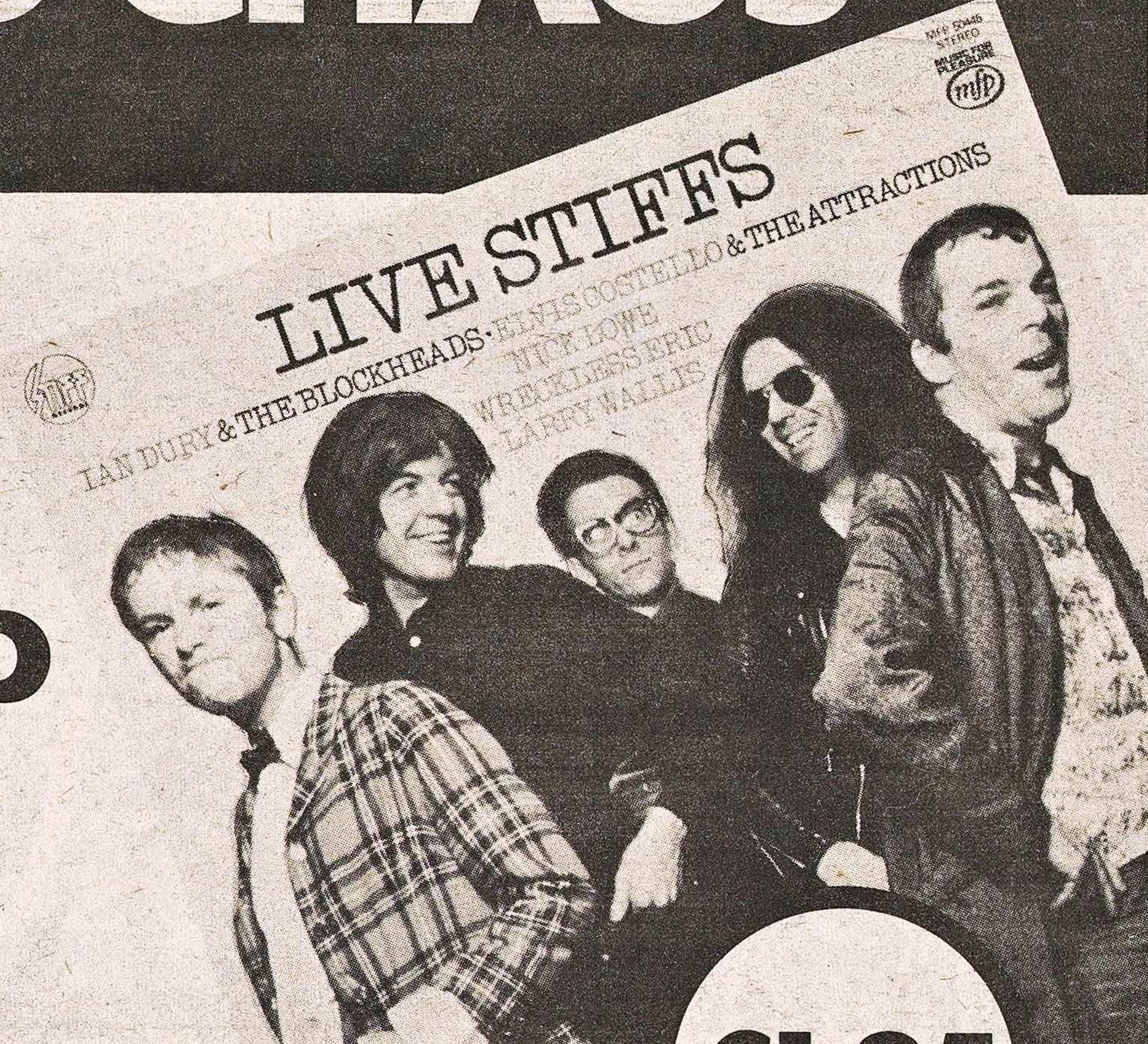

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Hammer: Prince Of Dread

IT'S A QUIET Sunday afternoon in Harlesden town and Prince Hammer is taking full advantage of the day of rest. Two days earlier he'd performed at the Rainbow theatre, the culminating gig of the 'Simply what's happening . . .' tour with The Slits and trumpet player extraordinaire, Don Cherry — a new phase in establishing the Prince's growing repute.

Hammer's first shots on record were for rydim master Glen Brown on the Pantomine label, superior discs like "Sugar down deh" and "Tel Aviv Skank". In those days you'd find Hammer standing round the mixing board in either Joe Gibbs' or King Tubby's studios, watching and learning — Apprenticeship time! A rydim given to him by Glen Brown provided the finance for his first self-productions, "King of Kings", "Adisababa" and "Lord of Lords".

Originality is what he deals with, and he's constantly working on new ideas and music. But though he spent much of his youth days working Sound Systems like Veejay, Sir Daley Hi-Fi and Sir George, he doesn't use sound any more.

"I keep track on everything by using my brain and my skill" says Hammer. "I don't work Sound now cause most time when you're toasting sound you get back your lyrics on record (from other D.J's) and you're not seen as the originator. For that I don't do it any more."

Originally working under his own name, Berris Simpson, it was a youth named Willy Nilly who persuaded him to operate under the new moniker of Prince Hammer. The switch was a cool one, with the Hammer/Horror connection leading to the emergence onstage of a dread version of Christopher Lee . . . "with the teeth too".

"I want to be recognised not by doing a t'ing that other people do but by coming my way" continues Hammer. "That's why I come in the Dracula outfit, but you have like Bongo Herman or else a man who follow on now, putting on a cape or making a cape like my own. To this time they can't find my style, and seeing everyone coming and doing like I'm doing I mek ah turn and work as a Judge and do a play call 'Judgement on the land.'

"It's about a man who's been charged with drinking too much special brew or smoking too much funny-smelling cigarette", grins "Judge" Hammer. "But the accused is a bit of a puzzle 'cause it could be anyone in the audience. The jury now is the band and they go off-stage for two or three minutes and come back with a verdict of guilty. Well, at the end of the play, the judge, who is the only man deh sitting, then seh will the accused please stand, and then here comes the judge standing up . . . JUDGEMENT ON THE LAND!!" The news that he was to tour with Slits came out of the blue for Hammer, who had returned to JA after a roots tour organised by Hitrun records had finished. Says Hammer, "touring with Don Cherry give me a different kind of music too . . . just sitting down and really admiring the things they do on stage; listening to the chords they play gives me ideas still".

The Slits tour was an important initiative, as it extended the musical and cultural terrain, pinpointing cross-references and influences while confronting stereotypes. It gave Hammer a chance to be heard by thousands instead of hundreds, outside the "ghetto" of the club circuit.

On the record front "Wriggle I dis" is around on Pre, and he's already got two further albums in the can . . . "Thunderbolt and clappers" and "The General and the Criminal".

No-one can deny that Hammer's show on stage has developed, and his ability to innovate as well as lay down a balanced stage show with some slick shufflin' and steppin' and some good singing and toasting gives him the edge on any other DJ currently working in Britain.

"If you don't step it up," declares Hammer, "no-one's gonna make it for you. You have to make it yourself and you need a proper act to keep you in the audience mind in future days to come".

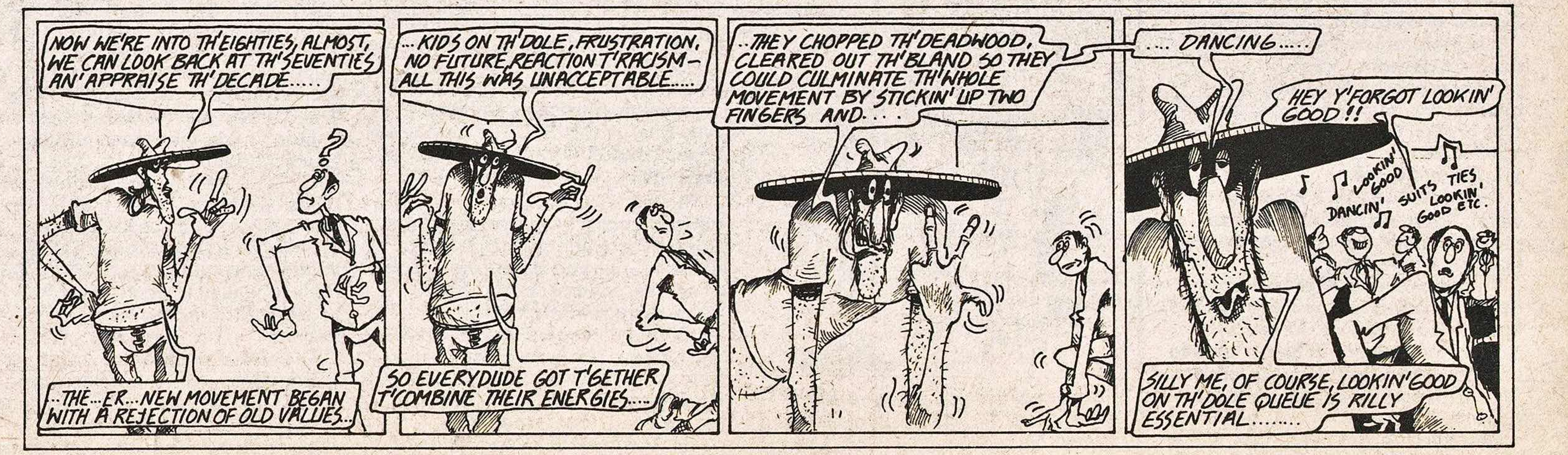
PAUL BRADSHAW

THRILLS

Pic: Jean Bernard Sohiez

The latest Hammer horror.

Benyon — **The Lone Groover**



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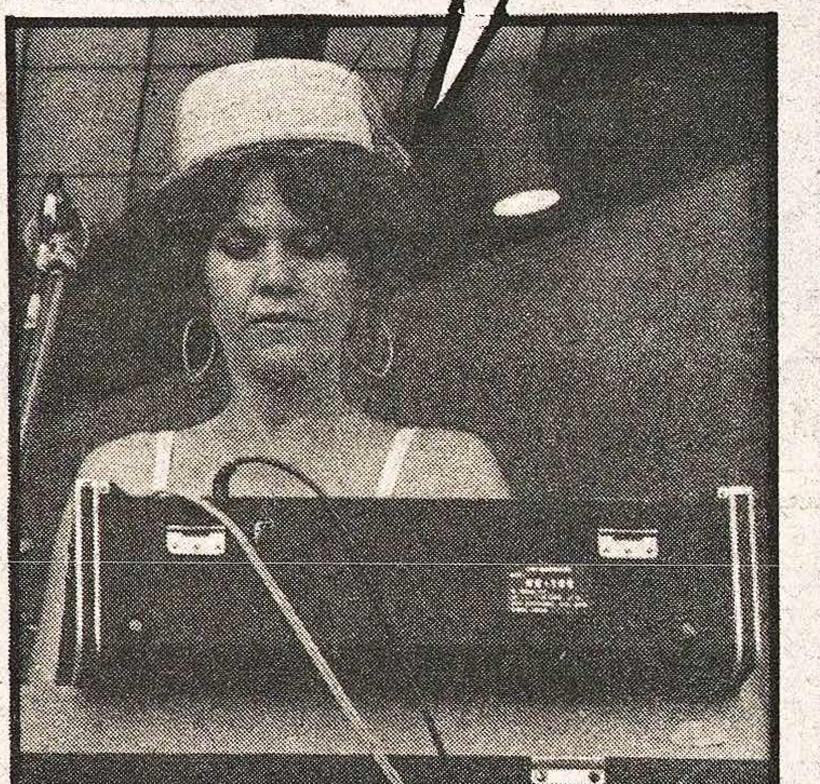

"NOW, at least half of you who entered NME's Beauty's Only Skin Deep competition guessed who we were but, shame on you, only a few managed to match our names with the correct photographs. Let's be honest about it, a girl can get a complex over such things!"

Anyway, down to business. Like we said when we first ran this competition, we have a whole bunch of B-52s albums, limited edition singles, monogrammed neck-ties and badges to distribute amongst the winners, so let's sort out who won what and why.

The overall winner, the person who wins a copy of The B-52's debut Island album, a limited edition single of the original version of 'Rock Lobster', a life-size replica of a rock lobster, a tie and badge is:

Chrissie Charlton from London W1

Chrissie confessed: "My lifelong ambition has been be wear my hair like The B-52s because *my hair dropped out at a Crystals' gig back in '62 and has only just grown back."*

The next four runners-up, who each cop the B-52s LP, limited edition single, neck-tie and badge — and the nation's sympathy — are:

Steve Whittle from Ormskirk, Lancashire.

We're all a little worried about Stevie because he revealed: *"I'm a boy, I'm a boy, but my mother won't admit it!"*

L Ashworth from Edinburgh was just as candid, claiming: *"I'd rather look like Princess Margaret, instead of looking like The Lone Groover."* He didn't enclose a photograph to substantiate that fact.

Jenny Sleightholme from Hull was another winner, her fantasy being: *"I wasn't old enough to have a bouffant hair-do when everyone did."* Does that mean Jenny now wears her hair back-combed? A photo please.

Richard Best from Garn Dolbenmaen, North Wales, was also a successful runner-up. Young Ricardo seems to have a problem: *They (Kate & Cindy) wear their hair in the same fashion as my idol, Bett Lynch."*

As it happens, there were 20 more winners who each receive a B-52s LP, a singe and logo button. We name the guilty:—

Adrian Sensicle, Harrow Weald, Middlesex; Janet Burnett, Aberdare, Mid Glam; C Glynn, Kingstanding, Birmingham; Mark Sperring, Weston-Super-Mar; Jim Thirlwell, London W14; Billy Pimblett, Liverpool L14; M Taylor, Romsey, Hants; David Butler, Westbury-On-Trym, Bristol; Rob Bishop, Solihull, West Midlands; Mrs Lesley Faull, Barkingside, Essex; Alacoque Ado, Lancaster; David Hill, Burley, Oakham; Steve Pugh, Southampton, Hants; Susan Doogan, Crumpsall, Manchester; Nicola Potts, Gosport, Hants; Clinton Hulme, Bury, Lancashire; Julie Jarvis, Ilford, Essex; Julia H Brooke, London W4; Mike Collins, Oldham; Elizabeth Light, Gwent, South Wales.

Clash USA '79
By Ray Lowry

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Atlanta, Georgia

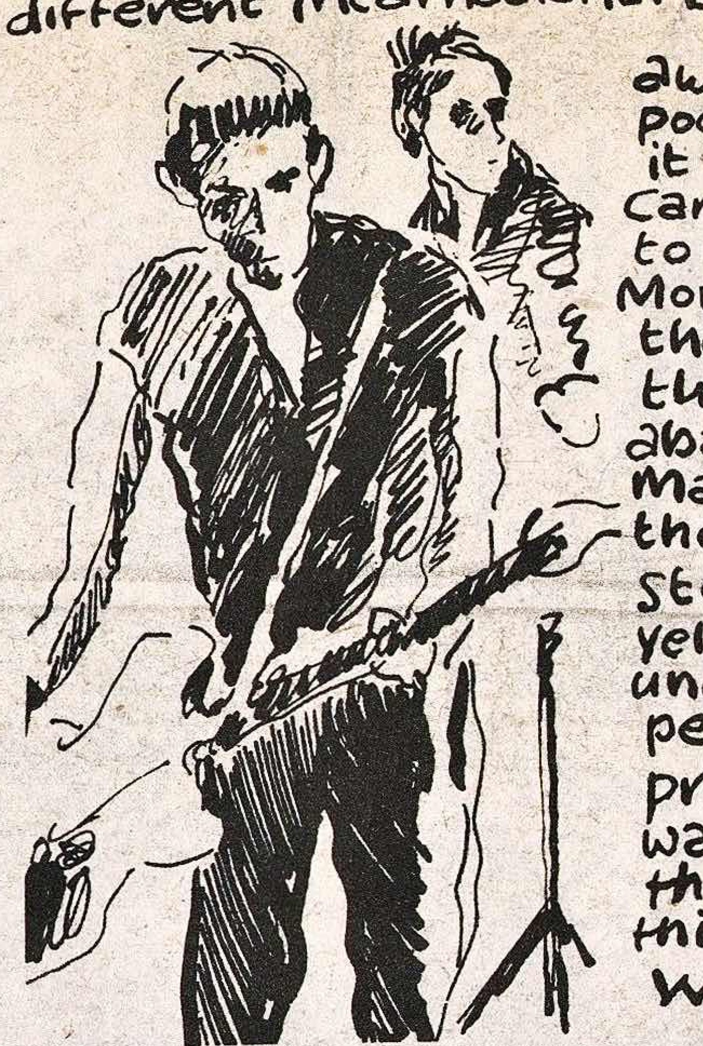
October 1st.

I forgot to mention Philadelphia's mutants - more disturbing looking people than even Liverpool or Warrington can boast. People with noses in their ears and hands growing out of the sides of their legs. Faces like a handful of stones set in dripping. Heads like hairy jellies and flaming complexions like sunset over the parrafin beds. Walking potatoes with pillows stuffed down the hole where their heads disappeared and gorgonzola smeared all over them. There's a metal statue of a giant clothespeg that these people ostentatiously ignore.

All that was left behind and the Clash bus clogged on to Montreal and Toronto for two shows on the 25th and 26th September. The Canuck audiences aspired to the level of visible enthusiasm displayed in England and this meant the first serious gobbing of this tour, although after a touching request from Joe, the long-distance throat clearing ended. On both nights the audience invaded the stage at the end of the set and at the O'Keefe Centre in Toronto about twenty or thirty seats died. That's New Pop.

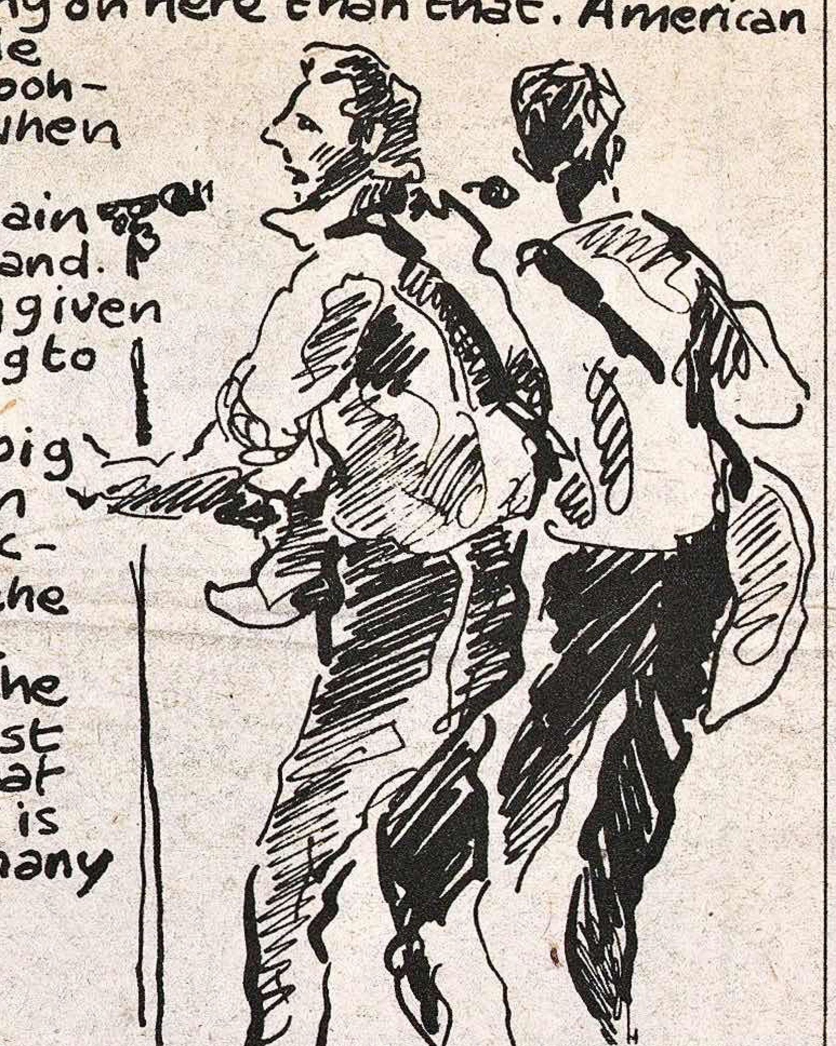
THIS IS AN AMAZING TOUR -

The Americans had 'Give 'em Enough Rope' as the first official album release (Although 'The Clash' is said to have sold in vast quantities on import) and an ammended version of the first album has only recently been released, but the lights are going on over peoples' heads all over the place, and the (P)political message has obviously been picked up by many of the punters who try to get their messages of goodwill through at the end of each show. ("What I saw in the band was a concentration of all the pain and outrage this system has lodged in my gut" - U.S. Revolutionary Worker 28/9/79) To many, of course, it's just a great rock and roll show and, as if guided by some infallible rock and roll tribal consciousness, the Clash are looking more than ever like the bastard offspring of Eddie Cochran out of Gene Vincent and a Harley Davidson. Dumbfounding to see the most intelligent, positive rock and roll on earth at the present time, being presented nightly by a band who look like the wild ones who haunted the troubled skies of the fifties. America is being reminded of how rock and roll looks, as well as how it's never sounded before. A girl hesitantly unveiling two oil paintings of Mick and Paul in Monterey, was face to face with different incarnations. But there's much more going on here than that. American



Kids are being given the rude awakening that was so swiftly pooh-poohed by the vested interests when it happened in England. After Canada it's marathon drives again to Worcester Mass., and Maryland. More images of America being given the message. London's calling to the faraway towns. To the abandoned drive-ins and the big Macks like sleeping dinosaurs in the fog at the side of the truck-stop, to the gas attendant in the yellow, all night doorway, to the uneasy sleep of the cities, to the people. Rolling Stone has just printed the album review that was needed here in 1977. This is the beginning of the end of many things. NEXT WEEK:

WAR WITH THE U.S.S.R.



. . . AND DID YOU MANAGE TO BOUFFANT THE BOZO?

WELL, ACTUALLY — no. Apart from the B-52s, we reckoned there were four well-known quantities:

A. Janice Nicholls of "Oi'll give it foive", *Thank Your Lucky Stars* fame.

E. Princess Margaret.

H. Cilla Black.

K. Henrietta Tiarks, Marchioness Tavistock.

Two of you got all four — Julie Stone and Pubique Hare — but Pubique wins the Brenda Lee single and can of hair lacquer because Julie mixed up Kate Pierson and Cindy Wilson.

The other ladies, who nobody managed to identify were:

B. One of Goldie's Gingerbreads — not Ms Zelkowitz herself.

D. A Blackpool bathing beauty whose identity even we don't know, except she was crowned by '40s crooner Donald Peers.

F. Country singer Connie Smith.

G. New York actress Sally Kirkland, as featured in Midnight Cowboy.

But the best bit, of course, is finding out what they were all doing. Ms Nicholls was pictured amidst an array of '60s stars including Pete Murray, The Searchers and Brian Poole and the Tremeloes, whilst Henrietta Tiarks was deep in conversation with Andrew Loog Oldham. And as for Sally Kirkland, pictured left — well, we'll leave you to decide!

THRILLS

H

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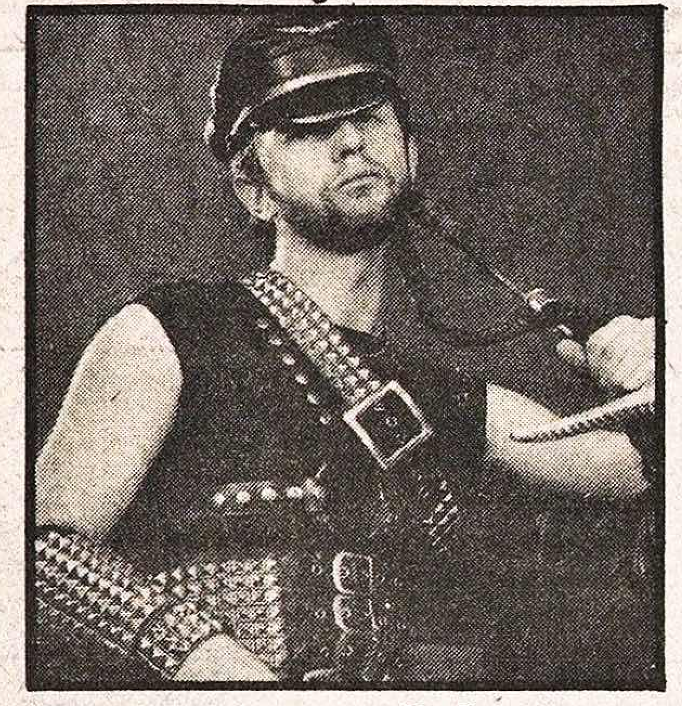


Priest: Up And Coming

BRACE yourself for a seamy saga — Rob Halford's been caught with his strides down.

Now . . . the murky depths of his past can be unbuttoned . . . and the terrible truth bared.

Halford, penniless not to say a little "hard-up" — some ten years back, wilfully succumbed to the beckoning finger of The Blue Movie in a bid for a quick buck. He was paid £50 for his part in the sordid celluloid classic *Teenage Rape*. As to the exact size of his part, *Thrills*, can only hazard a guess.

Halford, now a metal merchant, has found that the said movie is being shown in cinemas along the route of Judas Priest's American tour.

"I'm embarrassed and annoyed," the heinous hunk revealed to the *News Of The World* "the others have been pretty quiet about it — just a smile and a wink — but I feel really bad."

Reflecting with a shudder upon the flick's content, he confides: "I haven't seen it, but I gather it lasts for 45 minutes. I was involved in some fairly explicit scenes with three or four girls.

"It wasn't pleasant to do," he winces, "more a desperate thing."

What can this mean? Can group sex be far away?

MAC HOMAN

THRILLS

You are now entering the video era

(If you've got the money)

HAILED FOR years as the happening thing, the video revolution promises to alter the face of the entertainment industry. Yet the launch of a new technology is seldom smooth and no one seems ready to agree on how, when and in what manner the revolution will occur. One thing is for sure — we have now entered the video era and there's no turning back.

In the three and a half years since videotape recorders came on the market in the States, they have caught on faster than colour TV. By the end of 1979 an estimated 1 million TV homes will have one. From there, the hardware corporations plan to strike out further into the commercial heartland.

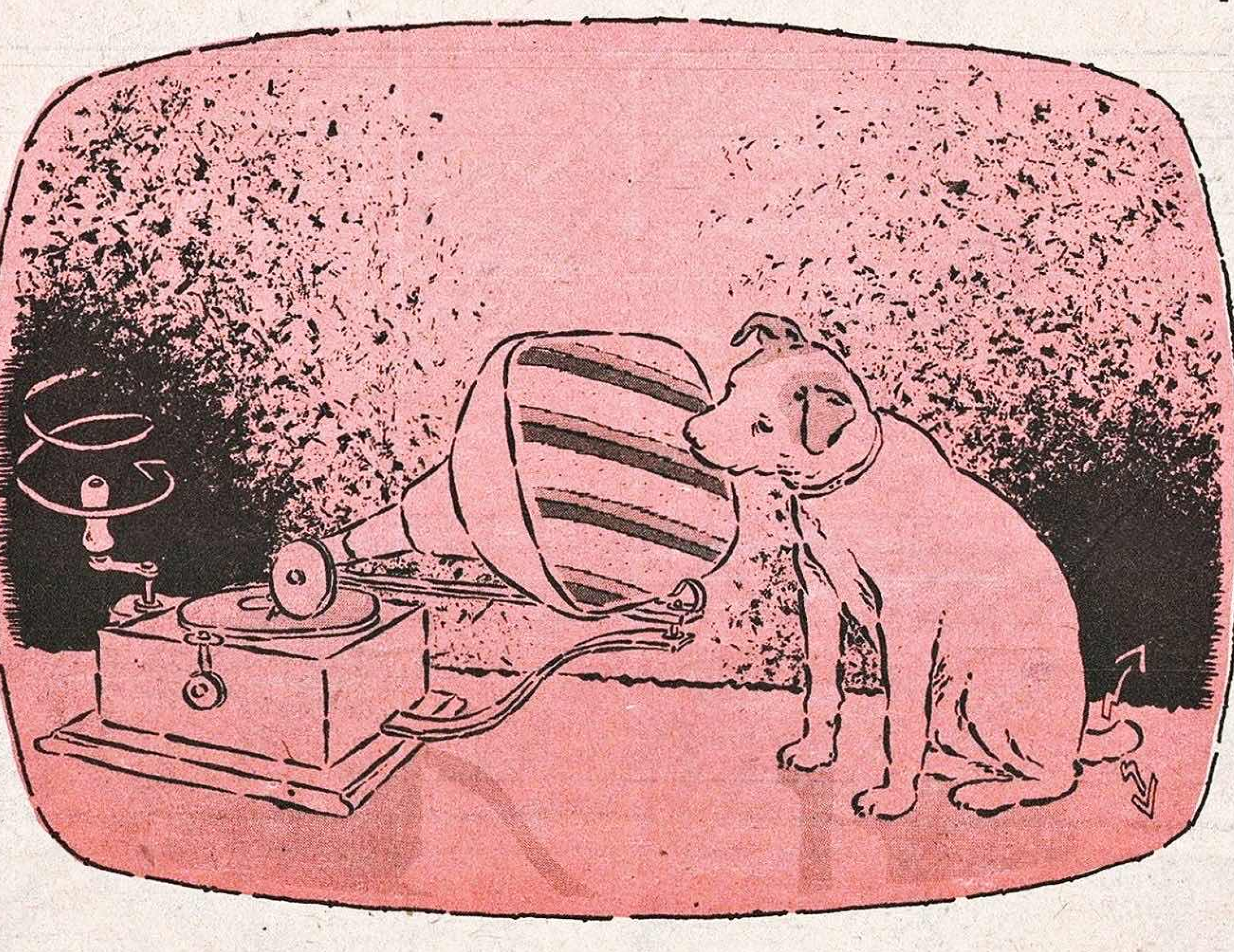
Yet problems still remain due to the rapid evolution of the technology and the lack of compatibility between rival systems. The battle to dominate the market is between two giant Japanese electronics firms — Sony with the BETA system, Matsushita with their VHS — and their US corporate supporters.

Standardisation is a long way in the future. With multimillions at stake, none of the corporations will throw in their hand until they're forced to.

As to the kind of tapes being sold, a 1978 survey revealed that during that year 3.5 - 4 million blank tapes were sold, followed by 1.5 million porno tapes, another 1 million varied prerecorded tapes and an unspecified number of pirate tapes.

In the UK the market is much smaller with an estimated 55,000 machines sold to date. Predictably, the market leader is EMI who, earlier this year, launched 12 videocassettes of feature films at prices ranging from £37.50 - £60 and plan a further release of a clutch of music videos for the Christmas market. By early 1980, EMI plan to release a catalogue of 150 items, including early Beatles' films — after first carefully checking up on old contracts to ensure they have video rights, thus avoiding major lawsuits.

The biggest legal battle to date involves copyright. Sony are currently being sued by MCA's Universal Studios and Walt Disney Productions, who claim that allowing people to tape TV programmes is infringing the producer's copyright. Although the case may drag on for years, most people seem to think that any attempt to ban videotape technology will be unenforceable, just as Prohibition was in the 1920s.



The music business is slowly but surely exploiting videotape, mainly for artist promotion. Last year Arista Records established the first in-house videotape production programme and other companies are expected to follow suit. Everytime Donna Summer cuts a record, the session is video recorded for sale on the future market. Todd Rundgren recently became the first rock performer to make an original one-hour programme for the home videotape market - a recording of his live concert at the Bottom Line.

However, as far as the music industry is concerned, all this is chickenfeed compared to the future prospects of the next wave of video technology — the videodisc.

Again in this case, a massive corporate war is brewing between rival systems. In one corner is the Magnavox, backed by MCA and Phillips, in the other corner is the RCA Selectavision. Two other systems are being planned by Japanese Victor and Matsushita. None of them are compatible.

The videodisc may lack the versatility of the tape systems but they cost much less and are simpler to operate. The disc producers will do best out of the deal and will be able to break even on a sale of between 10-30,000 copies. For this reason the disc market can be more specialised and will eventually resemble the book market, with its own best-seller lists.

RCA's top videoman, Herb Schlosser comments on the obvious implications for rock artists: "Those performers who come over well in a visual medium will have a real advantage."

His corporate masters are pushing their system in a big way, aiming to capture half of what they see as a massive market. Their first catalogue, due to be launched next year, will contain 250 titles, including live music discs.

However it is the MCA/Phillips system which has reached the marketplace first. They've sold some 2,000 of their Magnavox players to date and their catalogue contains 202 titles, mainly feature films from Universal. You can already buy a disco of *Animal House* for just $15.95.

Of course it will be many years before this second wave of video technology becomes commonplace yet Phillips are already hard at work on a spinoff from their videodisc system which has even more far-reaching implications for the music industry — a new kind of audio disc destined to supercede the LP.

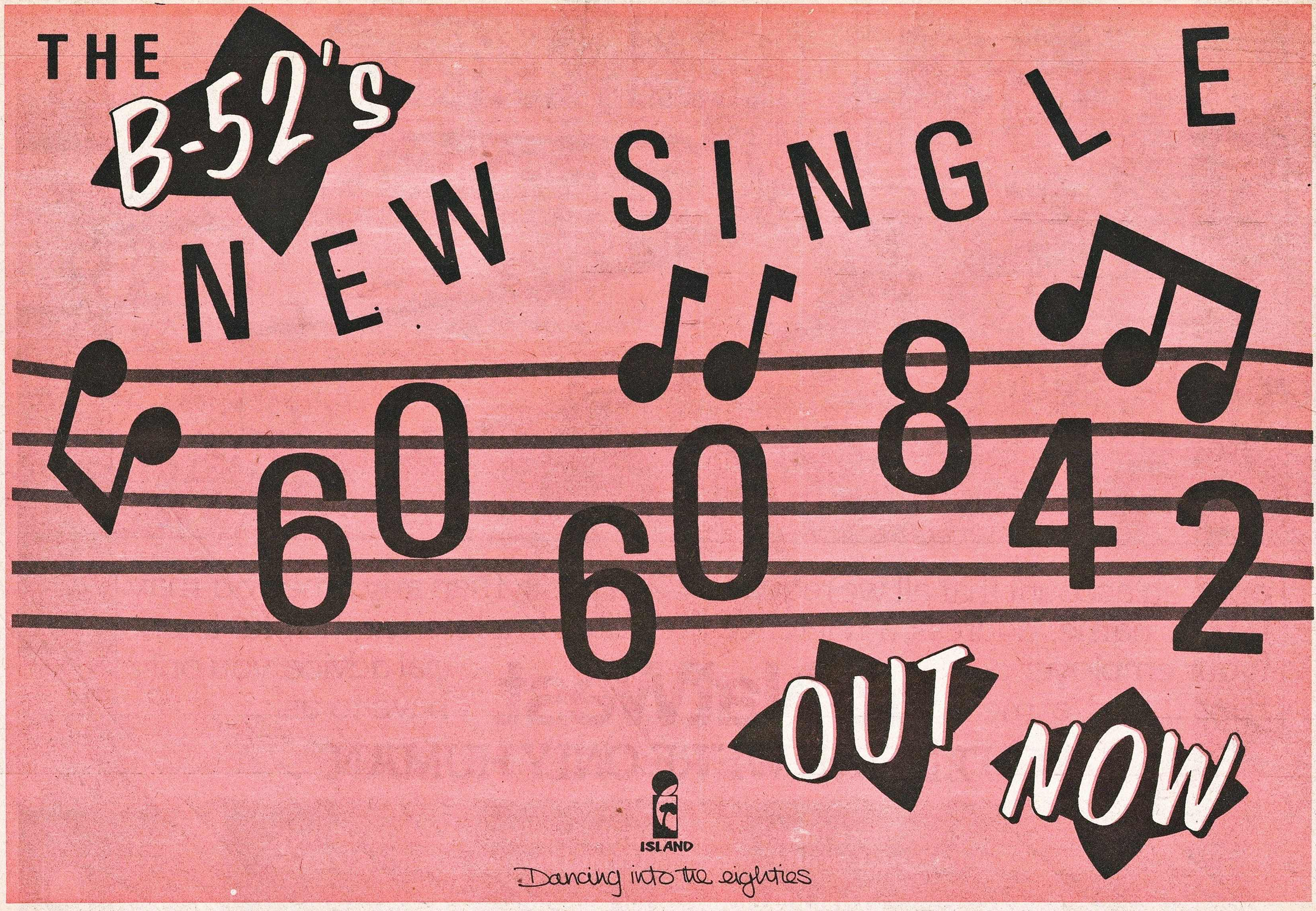
It's called the Compact Disc, a 4½ inch diameter "Super-fi" record which can be played on the new laser system. The disc, which apparently can produce a sound of fantastic fidelity, plays for an hour a side, is dustproof, scratchproof and won't wear out because there's no direct contact between the disc and the laser.

Phillips claim that existing stereo set-ups can be modified with a few expensive additions and, in the further future, they plan to market a single turntable for both sound and films.

The combined effects of these new technologies will affect us all. But, with most people struggling to scrape up the money for a piece of vinyl it seems, in this country at least, it will be later rather than sooner.

DICK TRACY.

THRILLS



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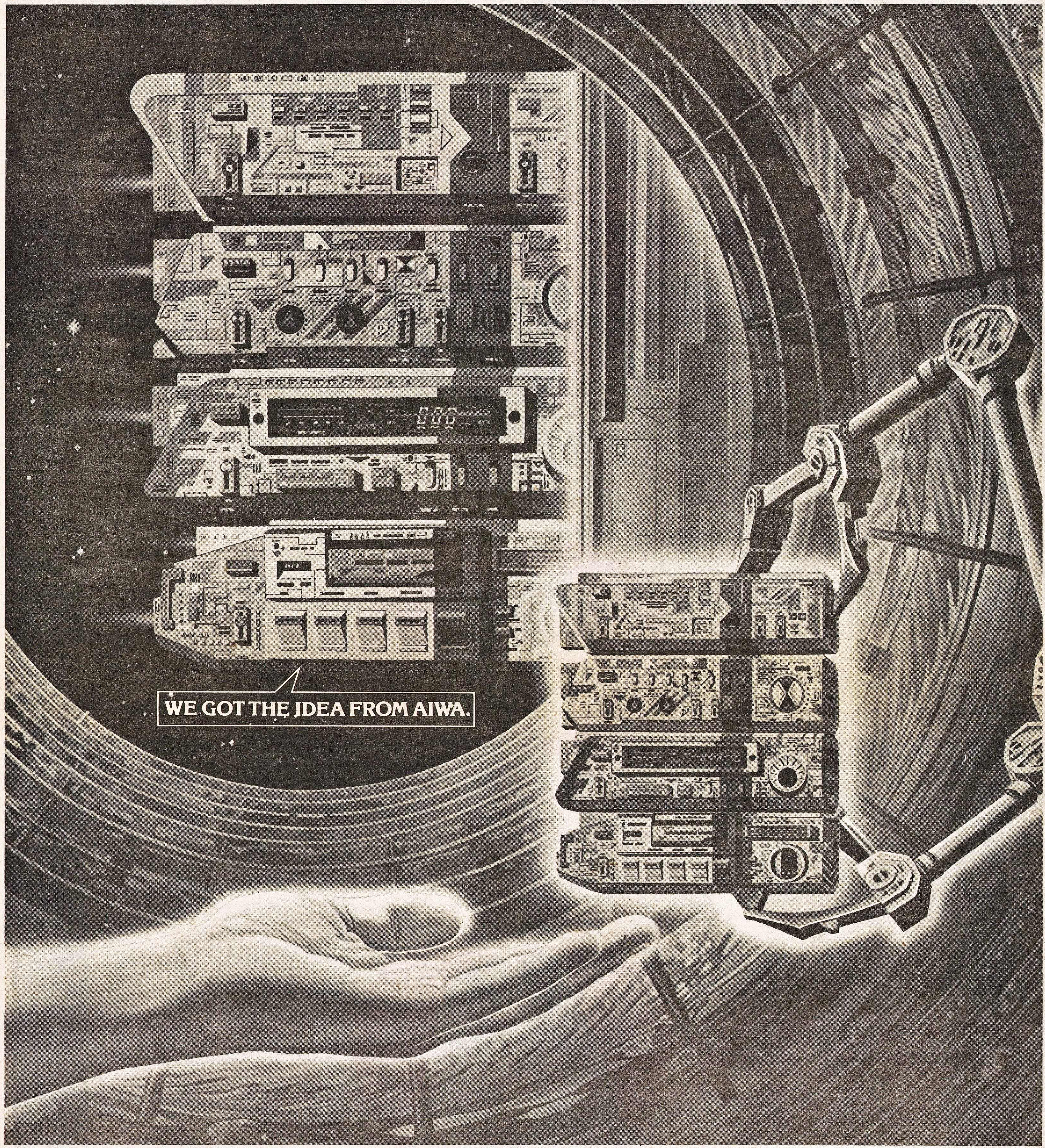

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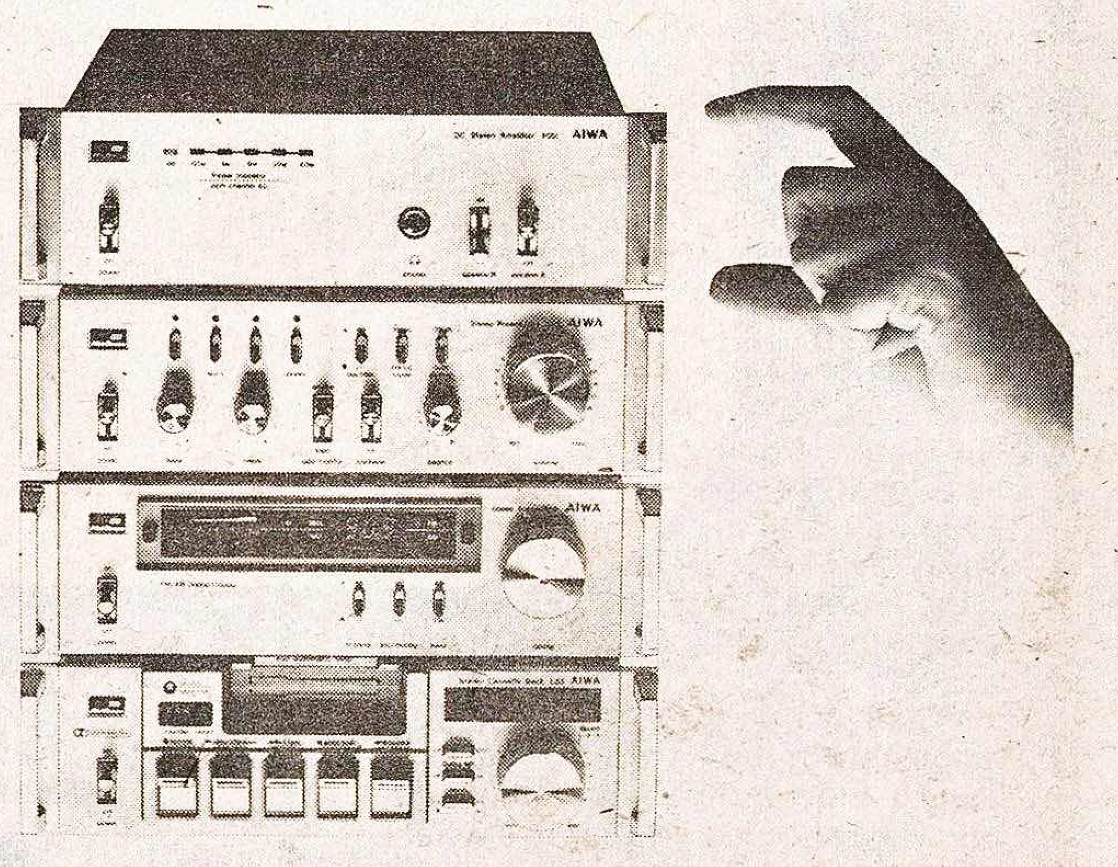

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Extract from The NME Dictionary Of Rock:

LENE LOVICH (n.f.): A Hit Ms That Refuses To Fit

LENE Lovich, five foot nothing of old lace, obscure ancestry and pigtails, is what in old showbiz parlance they call a trouper. She can take the strain.

She takes a day crammed full of interviews, TV shows, photographers, autograph hunters and an important live gig in her purposeful stride, fighting off flu germs nesting in her throat at the same time. And she took the strain on the Be Stiff tour earlier this year — a five ring circus organised by the world's least sensible record company to snatch some of its minor enigmas from the jaws of obscurity.

A Stiff majordomo said at the time that if any of the acts were a success, they would come back to Stiff; otherwise, there would be no Stiff to come back to. No prizes will be given at this stage for guessing who redeemed the pawn shop ticket: a square peg in the round compartments of the pop charts, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, please welcome for the first time ever live on reclaimed Dutch soil, *Lay-na Loo-vitch.*

Holland absorbs English-speaking rock culture with the same liberal lack of concern with which it embraces such things as drugs and pornography. Apart from the aroma of legalised combustibles pervading Amersterdam's infamous Paradiso, I might be anywhere. The Paradiso, a seamy, run-down church, plays a most cosmopolitan host to Lene Lovich and her brand new band the only way it knows, divided between hash-induced states of blank reception and a more lively hue wrought by less exotic brews. Typical scenemakers litter the hall looking typically blase.

Normally the Dutch go a bomb on American cowboy boogie. But they like *noo wafe* too, though they take The Meteors, Lene's support act, lightly; enjoying the competent pastiche of Rumouresque rock and Thin White Dukish vocals for about what it's worth — which puts a strain on the credibility of EMI's touting them as 'Holland's top band'.

If you so much as mention Herman Brood, however, the average Dutch person's enthusiasm will boil over. Ditto for Nina Hagen, who, says one of her friends, "is very big. You only have to talk to her to know how big she is!"

Brood has sold himself as the time-honoured rock outlaw figure, replete with leather pants, motorbike and Edge City lifestyle. All he needs do to seal the myth is die. Meanwhile he's made a film called *Cha Cha,* where he plays out his chosen role with support from his short-lived spouse Nina and an English — well, sort of — popstar he met on a TV show called Lene Lovich, who isn't exactly small in The Netherlands herself.

There's no mask to peel off Lene Lovich, or if there is, like some black horror story, it's stuck down too fast anyway. Ever since their days of studying sculpture at London's Central School of Art and Design she and guitarist, co-composer, and special friend Les Chappel have looked . . . peculiar. But the stares they provoke now arouse more from recognition than fright.

"I don't really notice them now," she states casually. "Of course some days I feel sensitive. If somebody really stares at me or shouts at me I feel funny; I feel defensive."

Do you ever have days when you want to be invisible, just hide in the crowd?

"Yeah, of course. Well, not so much hide in the crowd; I'm more likely to hide in my room. But I don't see why I should compromise what I want to do because of what somebody else thinks. I'd feel a terrible prisoner if I had to change everything that I wanted to do so that I could be like everybody else, and anyway, I don't care to be like everybody else."

Lene gives tambourine and lace curtain a twirl.

Any amateur psychologist worth their empirical salt will tell you that people who grow up estranged, for whatever reasons, from the norm, whatever that is, will tend to accentuate the differences they feel rather than try to deny them. It's safer that way. And Lene Lovich's up-bringing was nothing if not fragmented. Not that she regrets it though . . .

"Because I think it has made me strong; made me a very adaptable person to, ah, emergency situations. It's helped me to be very resourceful and to look after myself."

Whereas compared to hers, Les' up-bringing was: "Extremely stable. Nothing has happened."

"But you enjoyed it Les so why not? That's how it should be."

And did you enjoy yours, Lene or was it better in retrospect?

"More that. I was sad a lotta the times, but I got over it okay. I felt very unwanted from time to time, which is not a good thing for kids to feel. Though it makes them more resourceful."

"It either does that," adds Les, "or it tips them over the edge."

"I could have turned out totally unbalanced," she laughs, "but I'm not."

"The borderline cases are always the most interesting aren't they . . .?"

"Oh Les! Don't say that."

That's right Les, don't you know it's not polite to make a girl blush?

BUT he has a point. And both he and Lene are well aware that their music places them on the borderline of rock acceptance and pop idolatry, though they don't much care to be filed away in either division.

It's a curious position to be in, but a good time to be in it. Though, if in pop you aren't hamstrung by the need to submit a cohesive argument for any forward motions, you still run the risk of being dismissed as inconsequential, without so much as an ideological leg to stand on. What curious constraints we labour under!

Lene Lovich takes her chances where she finds them. It's safe to predict that what she does next will be unpredicatble. It may be witty, melodramatic, gypsy-blooded Euro-music or even some sort of Siberian railroad disco but it will be a little bit different.

She and Les have recorded a new album in Holland, with crack ex-Roogalator drummer Justin Hildreth and an old pal of his, Mark Chaplin, on bass. Another former Roogalator, keyboard-player Nick Plytas, who cut the album but didn't want to tour, is replaced by Dean Klavett, an eager, amiable American out of Kansas City who worked with the Munich Machine, Frank Farian and Giorgio Moroder until he could no longer stand modulating between two chords for twenty minutes at a time (no matter how much he was getting paid).

The album, produced by Roger Bechirian — who produces The Undertones and engineers Lowe/Edmunds/Costello sessions for which service he is paid a retainer by Jake Riviera — won't be out until the new year. It was written and recorded on the spot, Les and Lene getting up at 8 am to write the song that would be laid down that same day, and features nothing by the writer of 'Say When' and Telepathy', Fingerprintz's Jimmie O'Neill, whom Kim Fowley has already proclaimed — take this how you will — the Graham Gouldman of the '80s.

Instead the outside contributions come from Chris Judge-Smith, an old neighbour of our odd couple, and a founder member of Van Der Graff Generator. One of them, 'You Can't Kill Me' has already found its way into the live set, along with a handful of duo's newie's, including the deceptively strong 'Bird Song' and version of Franki Valli's 'The Night'.

All this eclecticism in one set, with only two weeks of rehearsal to weld it together. Doesn't it make you giddy, Lene?

"We didn't want to be safe. We're very serious about what we do, but sometimes things are too important to take too seriously.

"We have a happy attitude to what we do. I don't want people to feel ill or upset when they come to see our shows, but at the same time I want to see them experience a few different emotions."

She denies, though, any contrivance towards this effect.

"I don't think what we do is in any way theatrical. It's expressive but not theatrical. I just get excited when I get on stage. It's not a character that I'm playing, it's just me on stage, with the lights on me."

And Les, who undergoes a dramatic change on stage, from a quiet, friendly bald man off to a menacing, shaven-headed figure of sharp, threatening movements?

"That's just 'cause I'm nervous."

He can spare his nerves the racking. The band, whom they're looking forward to settling in with after a string of relatively transient combinations, play with precision and flair that's equal Les' own — and as a rhythm guitarist they don't come much tighter. But then he models himself on the line that began with Steve Cropper and traces right through to Nile Rogers. He couldn't really go far wrong.

And if he did, it would barely be noticed by the Paradiso crowd, bewitched as they seem to be by the shadowy, gypsy shapes thrown by Lene, whose enthusiasm easily dispels the cloud of illness that has hung over her all day. Her music means a lot to her; more, I suspect, than many people think.

LENE Lovich likes the bold statement (this doesn't mean you, Les); images with unusual but sharp definition that aren't

Continues over

PAUL RAMBALI (wrds) and JILL FURMANOVSKY (cra) check out the definition on Britain's most dressed rock lady

LENE CONTINUED

■ *From previous page*

necessarily concrete but are persuasive. She likes The Doors, and Salvador Dali, whom she once went to Spain to meet. At art school, where she did sculpture, her creations would often be enormous in size. But art school led, almost inevitably, to music, which was like seemingly everything else in her life an accident more than a design.

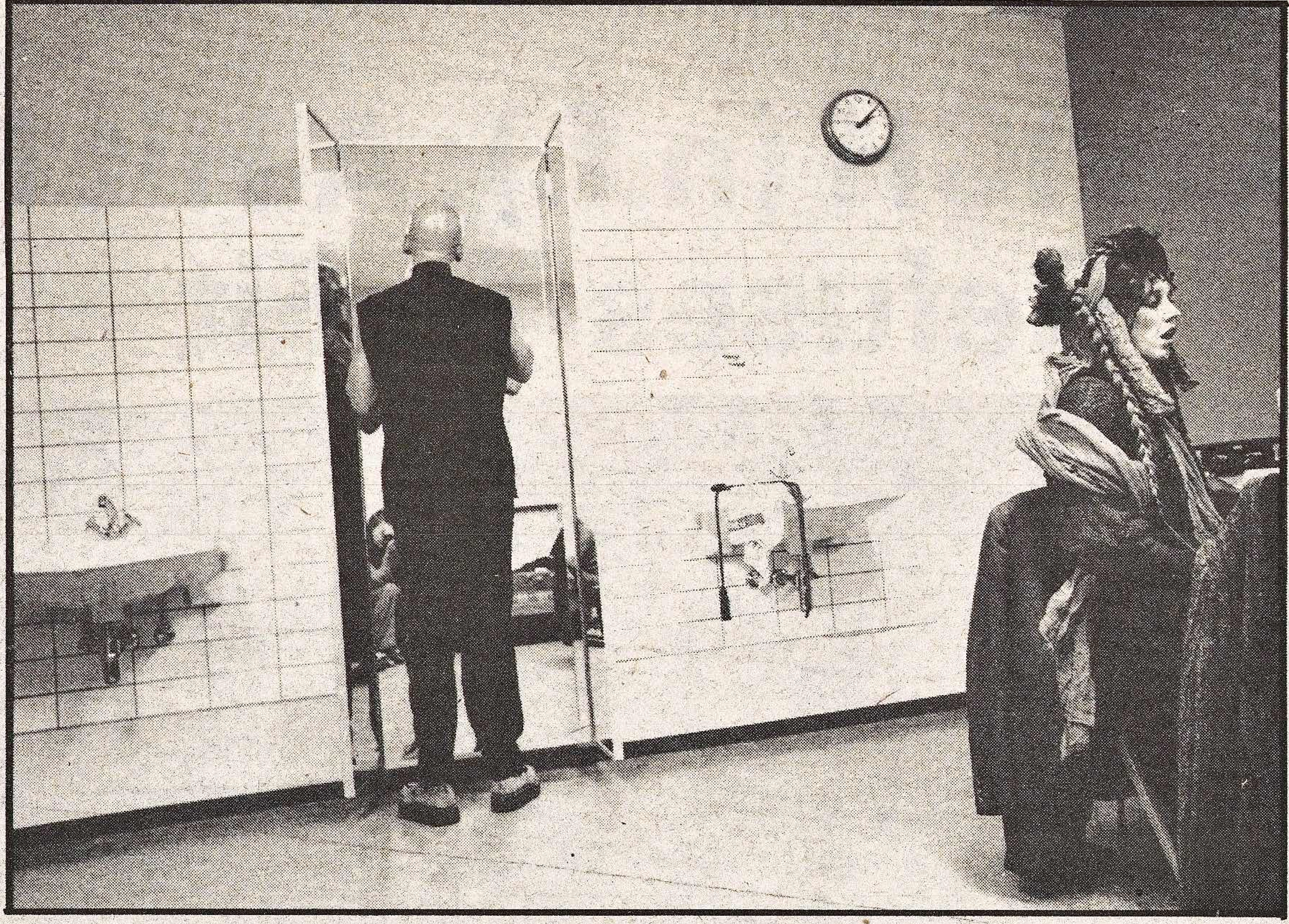
"I can remember back when I was little, living in Detroit, and the Motown thing was happening. It seemed to be a great way to get on in the world, even if you didn't go to college or have a very good up-bringing; it seemed to be a way to break out of things. So I suppose we did dream about that a bit. It was the fact that we heard it on the radio that impressed us most, especially Stevie Wonder because he was closer to our own age."

Lene's chequered life took her from Detroit to Hull and finally to London, where she and Les, whom she had known in Yorkshire and who had arrived at art school after deciding a degree in mining engineering wasn't for him, took to busking in the squalid precincts of Centre Point to supplement their meagre grants.

"Busking used to be great fun," recalls Les, who even then wore his distinctive hairstyle (or lack thereof) after Ziggymania deprived him of the originality of his previous one. "This was seven or so years ago and the whole thing has completely changed. But the spirit was great: you'd get whole crowds just gathering round and joining in."

"And sometimes the buskers would gather and make big orchestras," adds Lene. "Of course nobody made much money but it was great. And I like the idea of busking because you're not playing to a captive audience. If you're good and they want to listen they can, and if not they can walk by."

These lean years gave way to a spell in the Sheffield presentation of rock pantomime *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*.



Les and Lene limber up.

Then Lene decided to answer an ad for a keyboard player. She couldn't play keyboards, but she knew someone who could. Out of this grew The Diversions, a good time funk outfit not a million miles removed from the Kokomos and Average White Bands that used to bump around London's boozers. They brushed the charts with a cover of Carl Malcolm's 'Fattie Bum Bum' and then it was downhill all the way until they eventually cut an album for Polydor — which was never to be released.

"The seven of us were at this reservoir in the middle of winter to photograph the cover," remembers Lene, with amusement rather than rancour. "And Polydor came up with a four-man dinghy with a hole in it . . . I think then we got the message."

The progress of our Anglo-Hungarian subject from this to the status of Euro-pop vamp never threatened to be anything less than haphazard. She toured the continent with a hotel lounge cabaret band, acquiring confidence in her voice the five hour a night, six sets a week way. She dubbed screams onto the soundtracks of French horror movies. She wrote lyrics to Cerrone's 'Supernature'. And probably did much else besides that will no doubt materialise in the fullness of Stiff publicity.

One fine day a Stiff majordomo, the very same, heard a version of Tommy James' 'I Think We're Alone Now' that Charlie Gillett had persuaded Lene to record, backed by the duo's first stab at song-writing, 'Lucky Number'. That brought them a five-year contract and a place on the Be Stiff tour, and the number came up, though the race is still on.

One hurdle that took no time to surmount, however, was the limited options available to women in rock. Lene knows them all.

"We suffer from stereotypes more than men. They usually expect some kind of monster; either very cute, sweet, lovable and adorable, or a thing that shows as much flesh as possible, y'know, winks a lot, or else something very butch, or again something very homely.

"It's a little bit better now though. Females in general can be themselves: Poly Styrene, Siouxsie . . . I suppose she's being herself."

But then females with two hit singles to their credit and a zany image to go with it are vulnerable to criticisms of being mere panto-pop for the play school set.

"Yeah sometimes, but I think that's just shortsightedness. Maybe things are changing, but it's a very serious problem if you don't wear jeans. From a girl's point of view, if you want to be accepted in the music business you wear trousers or jeans. If you wear a dress they don't take you so seriously. It's true. Think of how many girls are taken seriously now and think how many wear dresses . . .

"I just decided when I went to Stiff that I would be myself whatever the cost, whatever happens. I don't want to have to live down to any kind of fantasy."

YOU'RE damned if you do, and dismissed if you don't. It isn't really so dramatic though. Lene sets her own criteria, and works hard to live up to them. She makes good pop, and makes no bones about it, but has yet to produce something that sustains what she and Les are capable of over the requisite 40 minutes; that employs more of the crafty wit of 'Lucky Number', the unique perspectives of 'Home', the concentrated mood of 'Bird Song', avoids the tiresome Slavonic rondos of 'Say When' and 'One In A Million', and expands the musical base to take in, for example, Les' interest in electronic disco, and take out the more trivial formulas they sometimes stoop to.

In the meantime, they look forward to making Trans-European moves across the dissolving musical common market borders.

They dread . . . "repeating ourselves too much; continuously going around on tour doing the same songs in the same way."

They expect . . . "that the world will get smaller to us."

And the thing they fear most is conforming.

Lene Lovich: a Ms who won't fit.

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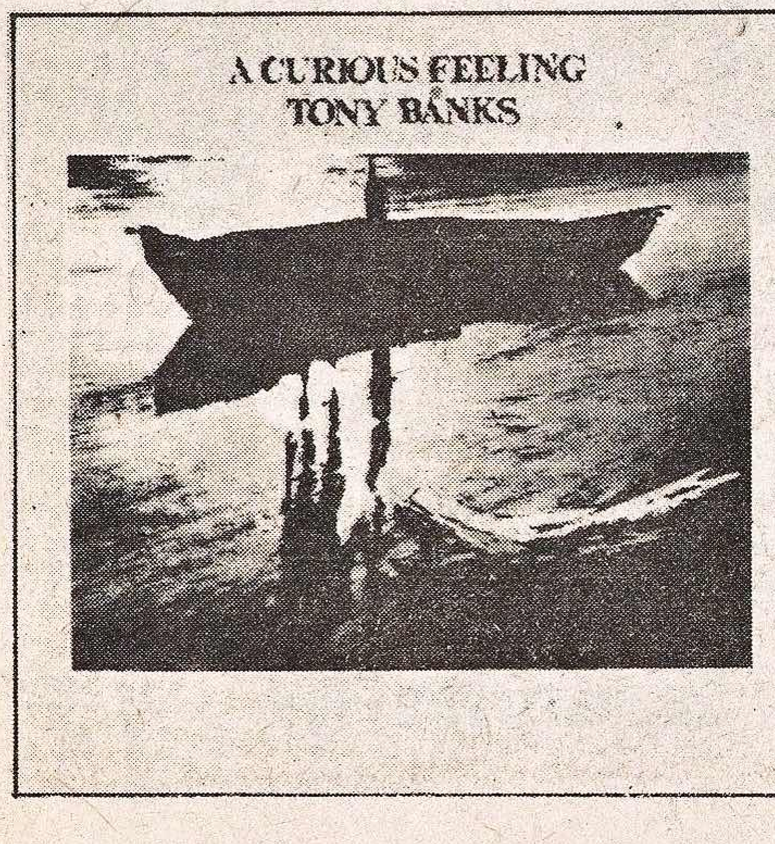

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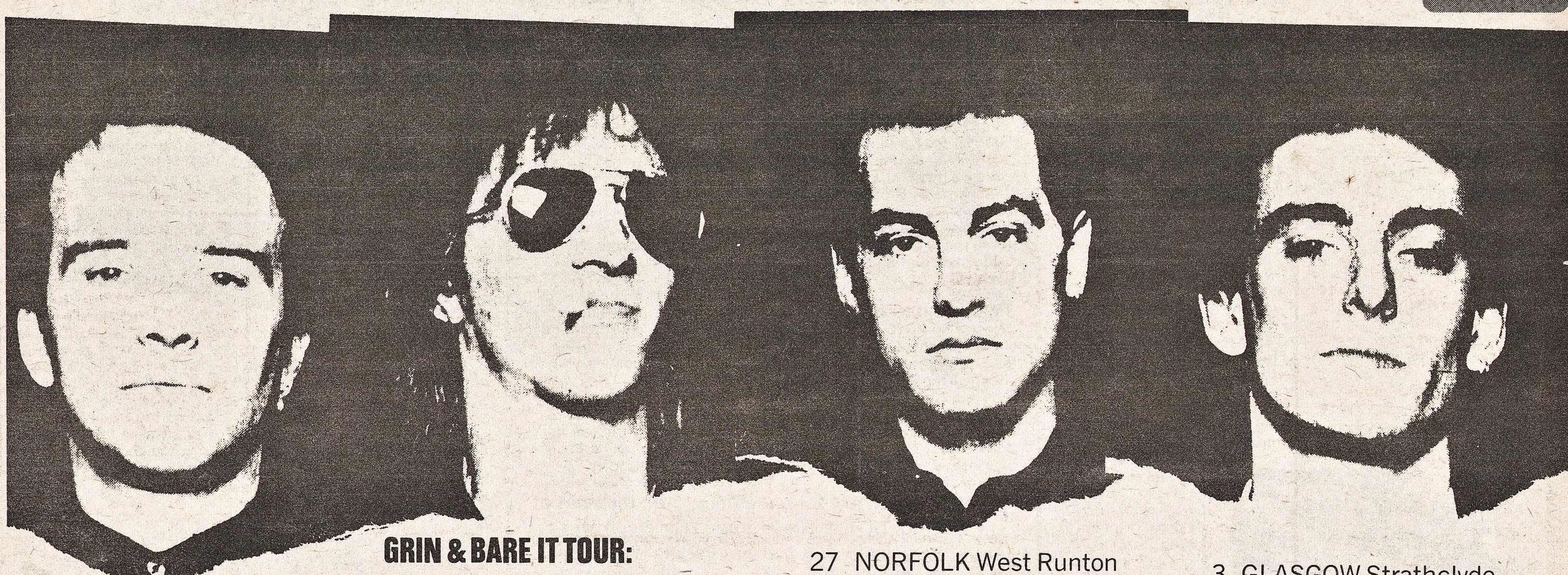
RUTS



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27 NORFOLK West Runton Pavilion
29 PLYMOUTH Clones
30 EXETER Routes
31 SHEFFIELD Polytechnic

NOVEMBER:
1 HULL University
2 DUNDEE University
3 GLASGOW Strathclyde University
4 DUNFERMLINE Kinema Ballroom
5 EDINBURGH Tiffany's

Support: The Flys.

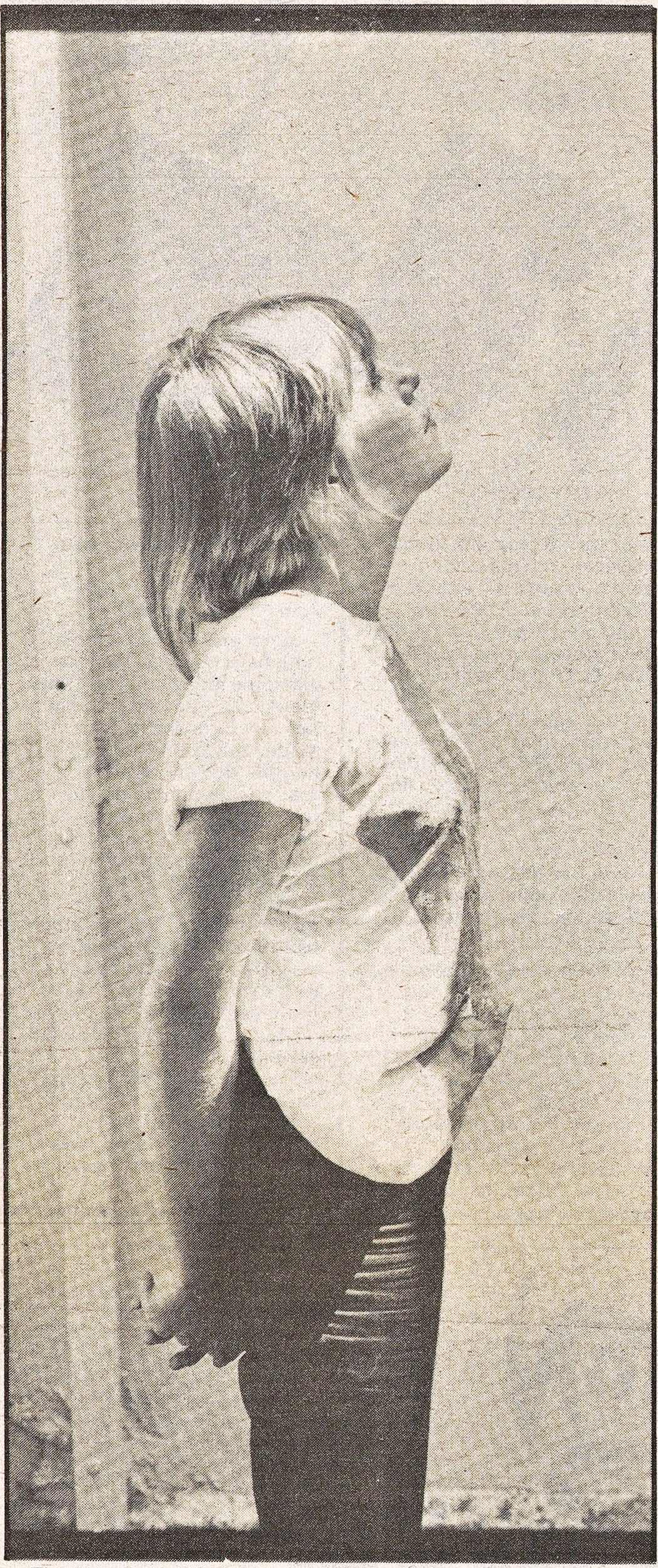
Virgin

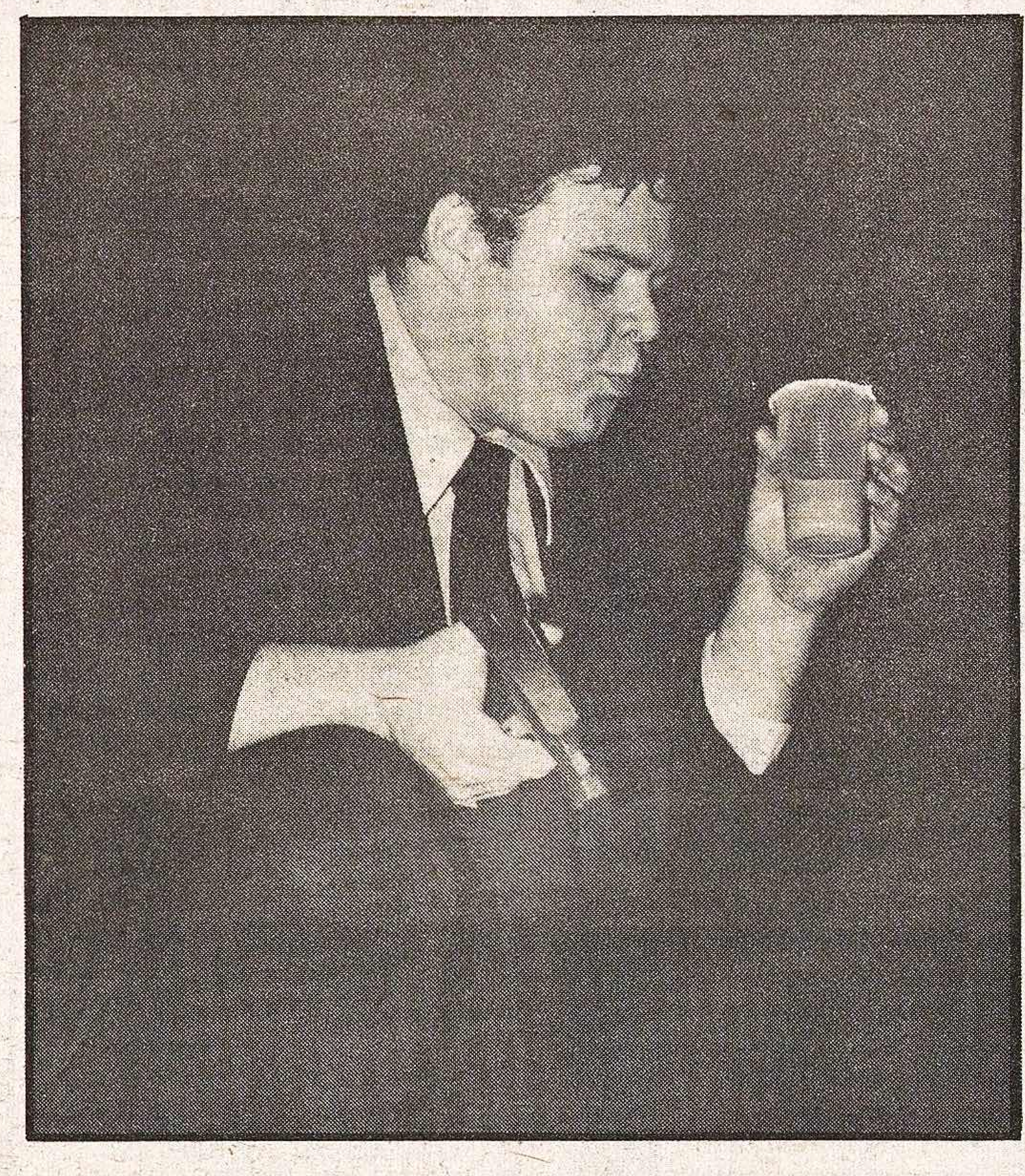
SINGLES

SINGLE OF THE WEEK
THE FRESHMEN: Never Heard Anything Like It (Release). Oh get out and buy it! A magnificent little independent that takes in a grasp of everything good from Jilted John to The Undertones without exactly sounding like anyone else around. Massive boon in that it has a generous sound — dynamite horn section — and whoever The Freshmen are they don't sound like sloppy beginners (in the best way). Unstoppable raucous delivery and brilliant words about a youth writing for advice on how to cope with his parents' constant nagging and moaning. 'Dear Judith' writes back:

"Dear mixed up, there's not much I can do/You seem to be somewhat immature/Your family sound a well adjusted crew/And I can only recommend that you/SHUT UP! YOU AGGRAVATING PUP! I swear that I have never heard anything like it . . ."

The music swings from The Diamonds' 'Little Darlin' ' through to Ramonerie, and whoever the anonymous male and female vocals are by, well, there's a hat off in Peckham just for you. The only stumble is the voice on the opening verse when the song isn't quite clear, but when it unravels The Freshmen will chiv strips off the most snotty of hearts. Quick, before the majors jump over it.





Tina Weymouth looks for the point; David Thomas hammers his home; Neville does it tongue-in-cheek. Pix: Pennie Smith, Anon, Kerstin Rogers.

THE SPECIALS: Message To You Rudy (2-Tone). The telethon Specials, who last week received so much screen time that they've now been put in charge of the Beeb's annual staff outings, follow up the infectious 'Gangsters' with a sweltering horn-driven bluebeat. No pic sleeve, but the label reads like the guest list to some cuddly jamboree: Rico on trombone, Chrissie Hyndes does back-up vocals, Elvis Costello produces.

The end product is not overly long piece of history that keeps itself sloppy enough to suspend our belief that this was recorded by a bunch of young Brits in late '79. Still, these are the best of today's vital young Manhattan Transfers and 'Message' won't be an unpleasant little hit although a tad disgraceful in its efforts to submerge itself so completely in museum fidelity. Plus, this was in fact second choice for the single after the original selection 'Too Much, Too Young' was mixed by the BBC playlist for mentioning contraception or something. And natch, The Specials don't hargue.

PERE UBU: The Fabulous Sequel (Chrysalis). Shouldn't imagine this one'll give the playlist much choice. Fairly hilarious bit of uproar with, at times, as many as three band members playing the same song. David Thomas pays respects to Esther Rantzen's hideous singing grannies as the shrill shambolic session falters because of a lack of bite in its anarchy. Ubu rehearsals must be dynamite.

CHIC: Forbidden Lover (Atlantic).
EARTH WIND AND FIRE: Star (CBS)
GQ: I Do Love You (Arista). Six sides of hit records and not a moment that doesn't already feature on some wildly overpriced album. Chic lose me money by not releasing the inescapable 'My Feet Keep Dancing' from their 'Risque' disque, and instead go with the not-up-to-their-own-pitch 'Lover'. The unadventurous clip will have them running on the spot in the Top Ten, but what with everybody's cash flow disappearing into penny-for-the-guy organisations they shouldn't take it so much for granted.

Meantime that famous Bengali curry Earth Wind and Fire (very hot) shove out 'Star' which is in the vein of their previous 'Fantasy', and jars badly before each chorus with a horn arrangement that sounds like the band are falling off a plynth. Pass it.

GQ are still desperately trying to follow up 'Rock Freak'. Actually I shouldn't think this *will* hit, or rather I hope not. A 'tender' ballad of rare crassness, gooey and floppy, I said wet, wet, wet.

B.A. ROBERTSON: Knocked It Off (Asylum). The world's only Celtic Cockney follows up 'Bang Bang' with a rock'n'disco rumble alluding to the life of a superstar (now that he's made it). Unashamedly Dury in all quarters, he queues up at the East St window for his share of the mugs game spoils — supply and demand. No sweat.

GIORGIO MORODER: If You Weren't Afraid (Oasis). For a change, here's a track that loses something on the change from LP to 12". Naturally, the company concerned have blundered in the choice of lift — 'Baby Blue' was the *only* pick — and this over-heavy schtomf, although well meant, sounds too dry once whisked away from its partners. Still, Moroder gets so close to totally cloning the brother Gibb klaxon harmonies that you'll have to smile at his sauce.

THE STRANGLERS: Nuclear Device (UA). Heavy metal Stranglers song that wags a finger at global government. Another in a current long line of nuke rock records. The problem with sloganeering rock'n'roll these days is that it tends to make people think that by buying the record someone else will be active for them. Just so many badges traipsing behind carnival floats, and although it is good to see rock making evil issues its business you don't have to be a bitter cynic to observe that evil issues make good rock business — which applies more over the Atlantic than home here. Anyway this record is immediately involved with The Stranglers and I don't like them full stop.

DANNY BAKER sorts it all out

TALKING HEADS: Life During Wartime (Sire). The 45 punches with far more attack than on the indecisive 'Fear Of Music' LP, so start with this before scooping up the 33. A direct rock single with, for this outfit, surprisingly direct lyrics, if a little predictable. Talking Heads stay firmly amongst my top ten groups although quite how comfy another LP will sound is debatable.

(What a dry little review that was! I must remember the family crest — Schpiel Howler et Tot: To Crack Gags — That Is Everything.) Hear this record too.

HENRY: Baby Sign Here With Me (A&M). Henry Badowski was one of the original Step Forward mafia along with Squeeze, Mark Perry and Gene October. He's been dossing around for the last couple of years searching for his ideal band, and has finally found it seeing as how he plays everything here himself. His single though lacks heart and involves Syd Barrett vocalising — though I don't pretend to know much of that held-in-awe misfit — amongst an early Stranglers form of rocking. He'll wheelbarrow home mountains of moolah one day, but this stuff won't get him off the milkround.

PAULINHO DA COSTA: Deja Vu (Pablo). Seems as though somebody's hammering away at the footpump and raising the old Pablo jazz label out of the mire. I wonder how Joe Pass is these days? This is one of the biggest selling articles in the disco charts and lasts for almost eleven minutes. Great brass and back-kicking rhythm but Paulinho sings like Curtis Mayfield after being in the wrong place on a defensive wall. What with David Bendeth's limp-spined 'Feel The Real' and Spyro Gyra's rubbish I'm beginning to worry about disco direction.

MANHATTAN TRANSFER: Birdland (Atlantic). certainly one of the strongest singles this week and no joke. The Manhattan Transfer, for all their *Two Ronnies* mums and dads homely sap, have turned this thing around on their public. Just when another soft shoe 'Chanson D'Amour' would fill them the Palladium they cover the Weather Report gem with lyrics by Jon Hendricks, It's strong, disciplined and demands further listening. Seriously, bottle up the sneers and pre-conceptions and appreciate. Incidentally they now appear to favour Gary Numan over Gene Kelly in the wardrobe division . . .

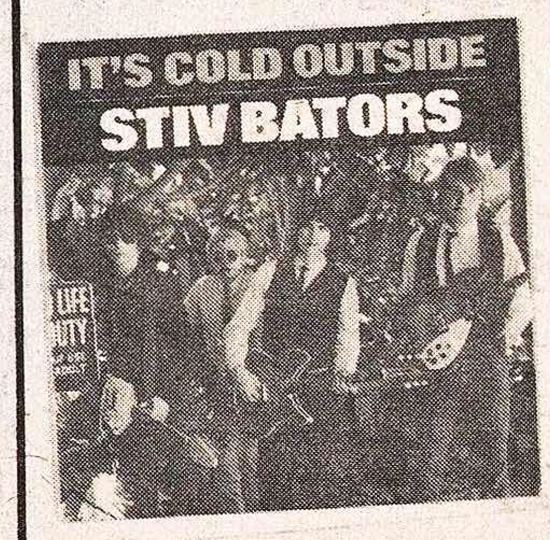
STIV BATORS: Cold Outside (Bomp). What a daft name Stiv is for a start. Anyrate, Stiv has been a keen shopper at his import store and has decided to trade in his snot and snarl for some wimp and waistcoats. Two of his band dress down like The Knack and he tries for a cute pop harmony on his Bomp debut. But how can we forget such a fabulous past as The Dead Boys? Stiv never will — though Lord knows he's trying . . .

YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA: La Femme Chinoise (A&M). Rigged out in tuxedos and gold painted faces, the YMO make tippy tappy synthesizer music that is neither exciting, funny or clever. Our Jap entertainers may have taken on this camp image after hearing of Walter Carlos' sex change. Moroder, they'd like Tomita. (Oh such shafts of outstanding punmanship from our reviewer!)

GREG VANDIKE: Clone (Cloned). The volts throb, the filaments grow red hot, the moogs go melodic, and our man Greg — a kind of Lou Reed lookalike with Nils Lofgren overtones — does in fact make attempts at a memorable tune. A drag that he's plumped for the hackneyed 'Clone' lyric but he sounds as though he enjoys making records — which is more than can be said for the amazingly fabulous Garfield E. Numan.

NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE: My, My, Hey, Hey (Reprise). Any record with one man and an acoustic guitar is NOT a single. Neil, as usual, sounds as though he's lost a fiver and found a pound. I was prepared to go on about his praiseworthy albums, but er, they really aren't so much to write home about and that's all there is about it. Verdict: No wigs get flipped.

■ *Continues over*



NEXT WEEK BOX SPECIAL DOUBLE OFFER!

Choose either:—

THE NME QUIZ

Which of the following statements are true:

a) The average Dane spends about 2.5% of his income on furniture and carpets.

b) July 7, 2055 falls on a Wednesday.

c) Next week's NME will contain a unique Specials Special Offer that will not be for the weak-hearted.

d) There are over 400 post offices in Bolivia.

e) The pop group XTC were interviewed by Nick Kent for a feature to be printed in this paper next week.

f) There are more record players in the USA than there are people in France.

g) The week ending October 20 will see a feature on Kate Bush by Danny Baker in the leading rock'n'roll weekly.

h) The British perform about 551 million acts of sexual intercourse each year.

Fact is, all of the above are absolutely stone true. And in next week's NME you can positively identify c, e, and g in glorious two tone. As for h, well, we all do our part ....

Or:—

WITH A screech on the brakes the NME next week box pulls up with two barrels pointed right 'tween your nostrils. The rough, tough week ending October 20 will see this organ offering you the opportunity to gather your clan and high step it to and with the Sultans Of Skank, The Specials. But, hey, don't start making a hatband of the curtain just yet ... the world's most persuasive rock weekly ain't about to squeal the details until we get a new cover. Got it?

And next week's the time when we allow Nick Kent to display the full broadside of his meetings with XTC — people, the cops kept off the streets.

If that ain't enough, there's Kate Bush. At great expense Danny Baker hired the special equipment with which to lower the frequency on pop music's most canine attracting voice, and thereby deliver unto you an interview.

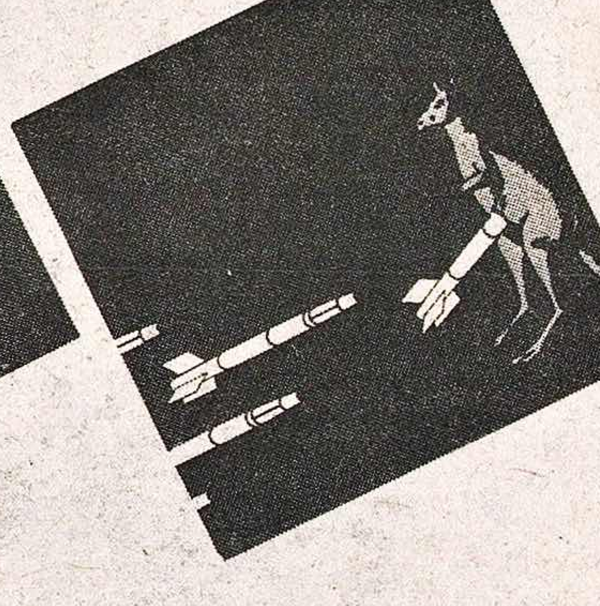
So what's it to be? Do you go wid us ... or do we send for the guys wid de violin cases? OK, you asked for it — it's Flock and Daryl Way till yer ears bleed ...

Now cut out the NW Box of your choice, paste on a postcard and send to: Richard Williams, Monotony Maker, Meymott St, London SE1.

SINGLES

■ *From previous page*

THE FEELIES: Raised Eyebrows (Rough Trade). A boring instrumental where the four gentlemen involved don't exactly stretch themselves in order to stir it up. Soft rock, take it from me. Please.



SUPERTRAMP: Goodbye Stranger (A&M).
LOUISE GOFFIN: Remember (Walkin In The Sand) (Asylum).

As if by magic, even before I'd taken the Supertramp single from its wrapper I heard what must be its opening chords. Not a little terrified I sat still as the eerie electric piano chimes grew louder, and wondered if my pre-judging of the dreadful bores had awakened some curse inherent in possessing the 45, like the passing of the runes. The 'Tramp play 'Greensleeves'? Heck, it was just an ice-cream van drawing into the flats. It was a fine line between hearing out 'Goodbye Stranger' — every bit as blueprint as you'd imagine — and shooting down for a twin-flavour oyster. I made the right choice although those bits of coconut don't half stick in ya teeth.

Asylum Records and Ms Goffin do the Shangri-Las delight in stodgy Ronstadt plod heavy metal. The worst burst this week.

THE POP: Shakeaway (Arista). Classy pop song which isn't at all the right sort to be. This West Coast bunch have been ground down too fine and clean by ex-Spark Earl Mankey and thus the song makes great listening for Knack produced by 10cc fans.

DISCO ZOMBIES: Invisible EP (Wizzo). As you might guess by their name, the DZs go for the obvious every time. The play in first gear Rezillo sound and hope to play safe for the undiscerning 'rebel' with would-be sarcastic attacks on disco-goers and, perhaps more ludicrously, *Top Of The Pops*. Apparently they still think *TOTP* is strictly MOR/Tony Blackburn affair and trot out all the cliches once thrown at the Thursday slot. That *TOTP* has included, rightly or wrongly, Siouxsie and The Banshees, Specials, UK Subs, Pil — well you should know the mile-long list — over the last year or so is beside the point as far as this Chester band are concerned.

And while we're on the glass, may I just say that I think that the much trumpeted *Something Else* has been nothing more than a barely baked shambles so far, at times on a par with the limpest university revue. If you really want to go unchallenged *that's* the show to go on, Disco Zombies.

JANET KAY: Closer To You (Arawak).
MINNIE RIPERTON: Lover And Friend (Capitol).

Janet and the late Minnie both have had hits because of winsome little songs and their 'dogs only' deliveries. Janet Kay loses the pretty lilting that made 'Silly Games' the number one and this goes around in a blander circle, with particularly crass lyrics only rising to true inspiration when she can stand it no more and confesses to her boyfriend: *"I'm a woman, You're a man!"*. With this, her beau understands why she can't throw a cricket ball as well as he'd imagined. The drum beat will make it another hit, but you shouldn't rush out especially.

Minnie Riperton teams up with Stevie Wonder again on a fairly trite ballad with notably crumby horns. Now I shall go and paint my tongue black.

TOY LOVE: Rebel (Electra). New Zealand? A good record from New Zealand? I thought only Fred Daggs would put Auckland on the world map and he's a comedian. We better keep spinning around cos the other side of the world is liable to leapfrog us at this rate. An exquisite double header from the unknown import Toy Love (lousy name). They must have bleedin' good eyesight cos they appear to have sections of this fair land sussed:

"Credit Cards and Maserati/Don't go to films less he knows they're arty/Likes Womens Lib and The Values Party/He's a Rasta and he's new wave/And don't do nothing less he's told exactly how to behave . . ."

Incongruously on a big label yet in the trappings of an indie, neither 'Rebel' nor its reverse 'Squeeze' are over-frantic or wasteful of studio time and vinyl. Maybe a little bit late '60s in the overall form but that shouldn't stop them right now, so track it down and earhole it. New Zealand, eh? When it gets to Chinese I'm packing it in.

SHEERLUX: Lonely Hearts (Warners). This comes in a similar package although as yet I can't hunt down any Kiwis. Doesn't matter really cos this is boring and whining away about *"Always making love to people I don't know."*

NME quote: It will give you the hump.

GILLAN: Vengeance (Acrobat). Mr G grunts over the stodge about his *"power, ooh I got the power"*. More goon pomp. The B-side, which begins with about three minutes of feedback and seagull type harmonics, finally gets into that old walrus 'Smoke On The Water'. For eight minutes yet!

THE MERTON PARKAS

On Vinyl
New album — **"FACE IN THE CROWD."**
Includes new single 'Plastic Smile'

On stage:

OCTOBER
10: Nottingham University
11: Bath Pavillion
12: Keele University
13: Chelsea College
14: Wessex Hall, Poole
15: Romeo and Juliets, Bristol
16: Trent Poly., Nottingham
17: Tracey's, Redditch
18: Norbreck Castle, Blackpool
19: Dundee University
20: Glasgow University
24: Venue, London
26: Salford University
27: Underworld, Birmingham
28: Town Hall, High Wycombe
30: Sheffield, Limit

Available on record — BEGA 11; on cassette — BEGC 11

Beggars Banquet

This Space Does Not Represent Elvis Costello

THE large handwritten sign attached to the sleeve of an import copy of The Jags' 'Back Of My Hand' displayed in the neon-lit window of Bleecker Bob's bustling Greenwich Village record store succinctly affirms: *An Elvis Costello Sound-A-Like!*

In itself that's sufficient information to stimulate steady curiosity sales in New York.

Imitation, one is constantly told, is the sincerest form of flattery, and, in the case of The Jags, a shortcut to a hit single and to date two *Top Of The Pops* shots.

It wasn't supposed to be like that!

"*That* record," insists The Jags' lead singer Nick Watkinson rather grimly, "has been a total disaster from start to finish. By the time it reached the shops we didn't want it out."

Within a year of turning professional, success hasn't exactly turned sour for this ex-art student from Scarborough, but it has left a bad after-taste. When I met Watkinson at the offices of Island Records, I expected him to be on the defensive, to claim that any similarities with Costello were coincidental. But being comparatively new to the game, Watkinson hasn't had time to develop evasive stock-in-trade interview tactics, or to disguise his contempt and disillusionment in a tangle of half-truths.

No way are things hunky dory in The Jags' camp and Watkinson isn't about to try and hoodwink anyone into believing they are.

Watkinson — who incidentally won second prize in *NME*'s Basement Tape Songwriters' Contest sometime back with 'Honky Tonkin' — admits that, on the positive side, since forming The Jags last year, he has experienced first-hand many of the things he used to read happened to other people in the weekly rock press, but, on the negative side, reveals: "I've become extremely disappointed with the actual music *business.* It's *not* as wonderful as I once thought. All I ever seem to come across are people whose only function is to fuck you up!

"I can't abide people who aren't straight with us. We just want to do things right and that goes for people who insist they're working in our best interests, but if we complain, people turn around and say, 'Stop whining . . . you're behaving like pop stars!' "

According to Watkinson, problems began to manifest the moment they were booked into Olympic Sound Studios for a week to work on their vinyl debut.

"All we did," he recollects, "was to keep playing 'Back Of My Hand' over and over again until we were sick of it, whilst the producer John Astley just stood there counting the time."

Seems that those in charge of directing The Jags' destiny were of the opinion that the lads strummed too fast for comfort.

"The session was a dead loss and when the time came for me to do the vocals, I just wasn't interested any more. Everything you could possibly think of is wrong with that record, but we didn't have much say about how it turned out. Because we didn't know what was going on, we got pushed around."

THE JAGS l. to r. Alex Baird, Stephen Prudence, Nick Watkinson, John Alden

EC clone hit "A terrible mistake" confess THE JAGS

Apparently, The Jags weren't the only party dissatisfied with the results. According to Watkinson, Island's A&R department thought the tracks were "a little thin".

Time was immediately booked at the CBS studios where the group commenced re-recording the same four songs they'd laboured over at Olympic.

However, between the commencement and conclusion of this second session, Island's supremo Chris Blackwell had previewed the tapes, schlepped in The Buggles ("Pop producers in the worse sense of the term," opines Watkinson) to overdub synthesizer, organ and other extraneous frills and slapped the single out.

Allegedly, the CBS session was much truer to The Jags' live sound, but only 'Double Vision' surfaced on the flip to indicate that theory. It's a track which, Watkinson maintains, demonstrates that The Jags share a kinship with Brinsley Schwarz as opposed to Elvis Costello. Personally, I find it more evocative of Rockpile.

Watkinson thinks The Jags most obvious similarity with Costello is that they both structure songs around an E C sharp minor A B chord pattern. But, he insists, it was The Buggles bungling that has caused so many comparisons to be drawn, and they, he continues, were only the beginning of their problems.

So far, two more studio sessions have been conducted: the first with The Buggles, a second with Policeman Andy Summers, to record a follow-up. Both sessions were a disaster area.

"It's embarrassing," says the exasperated Jag, "we're supposed to be Island's Great White Hope and they can't even get a decent single out of us because of producers.

"I never ever imagined that it would turn out this way," he continues. "You hear so many group's first singles and they're great — they've either been fortunate enough to find the right producer or they've done it themselves. We haven't been that lucky."

"Relax and tell me about your recording sessions," says Dr ROY CARR

The four days spent in the studio with The Buggles were, in Watkinson's opinion, "a waste of bloody time. They butchered everything we did. It was frightening."

They didn't come off any better under Summers' supervision: "I like the Police's sound, 'cause it's dirty, but ours was filty — a right mess.

"What really annoys me, is that after we've done sessions which have gone wrong, I get the producers onto me whining about whether I like the tapes and will I use my influence to persuade our managers that they're really fine."

In his early twenties, Watkinson may still be naive about the biz, but he's quickly wised up to people trying to carve out their own little piece of The Jags' action.

Recently, things came to a head and after lengthy consultations with Chris Blackwell — who they found sympathetic towards their grievances — The Jags will next week spend two days self-producing three new songs with just Simon Humphries engineering.

"You'd think it would be such a simple thing recording a straight forward four piece rock band; if you've got good material and a good engineer you really can't go wrong. You don't need some producer pissin' about, leaving his fingerprints on everything — trying to turn you into something you're not."

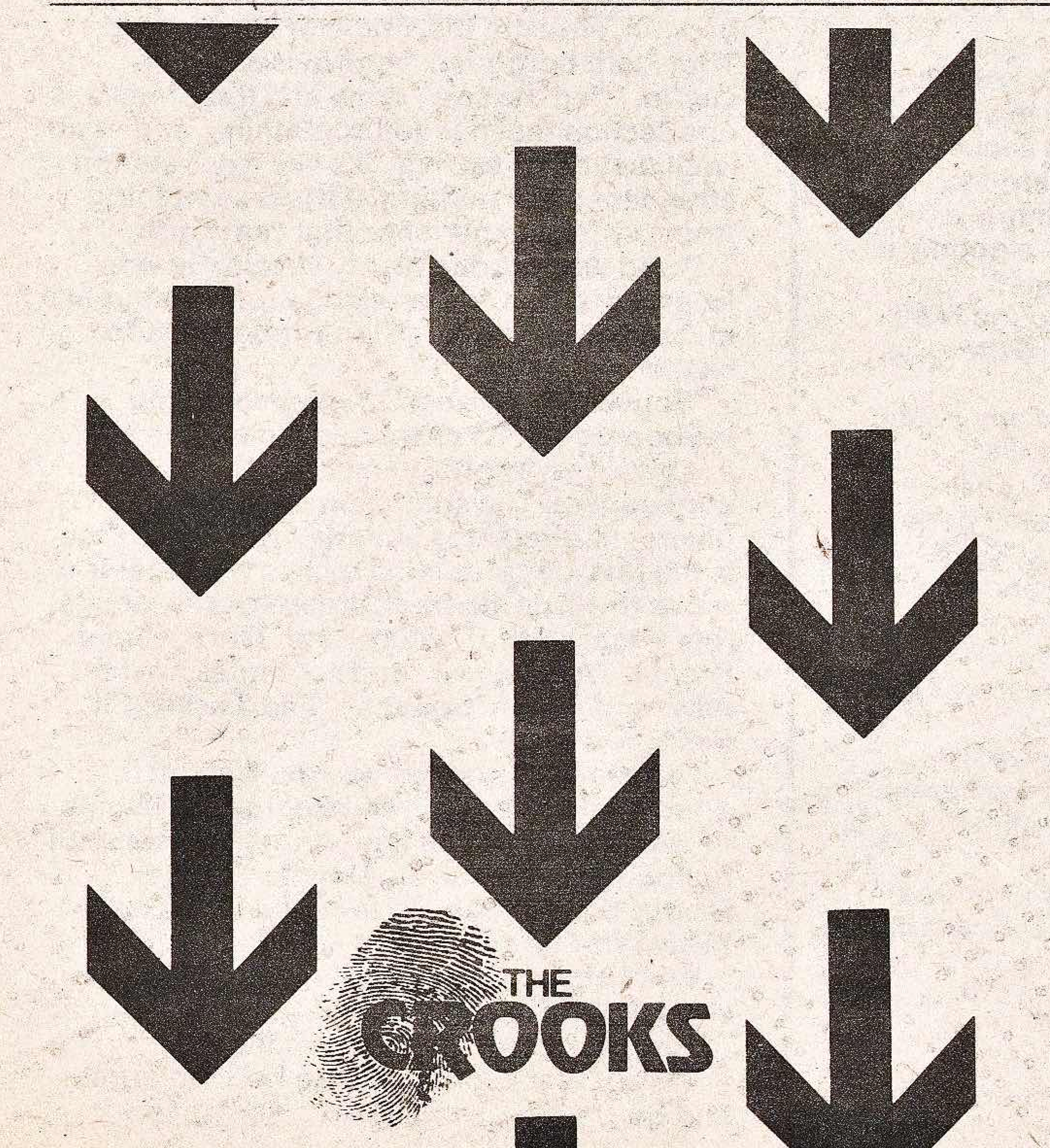
Like an Elvis Costello surrogate?

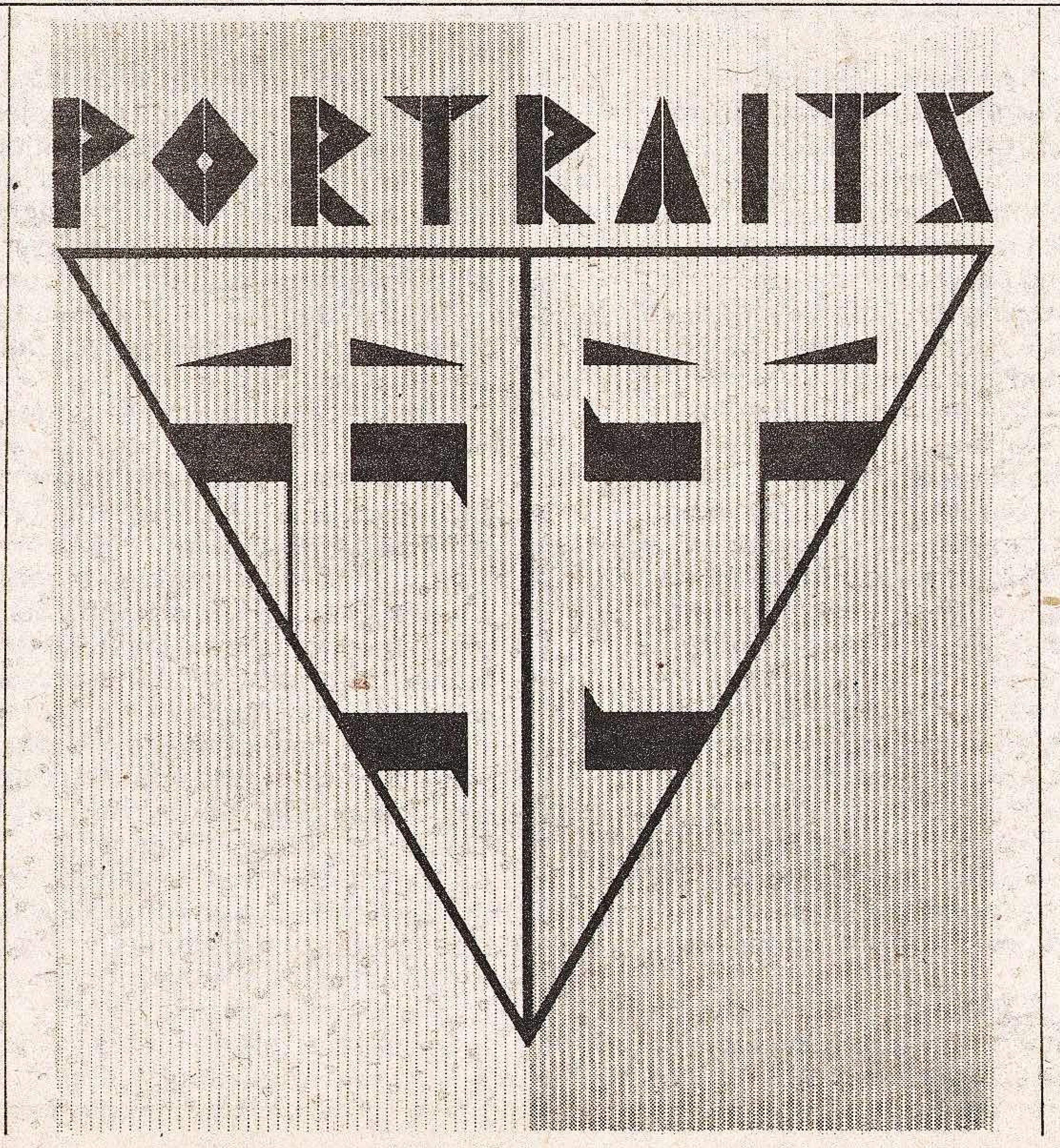
"Precisely. If we'd been allowed to get on with things on our own in the first place, we probably wouldn't have all these problems."

Speaking on behalf of the rest of The Jags (John Alder, guitar; Stephen Prudence, bass and drummer Alex Baird), Watkinson is confident the follow-up single will go some way to erase the stigma currently attached to them.

"I realise," he sighs, "this is something we have to shake off very quickly. After everything I've said," he concludes, "I won't be glad to see 'Back Of My Hand' go out of the charts, but it will be nice to replace it with something that won't be likened to anyone else."

If the worst comes to the worst, they can always reunite with The Buggles and anonymously cover Costello hits for such as Pickwick's cut-price 'Top Of The Pops' compilations.



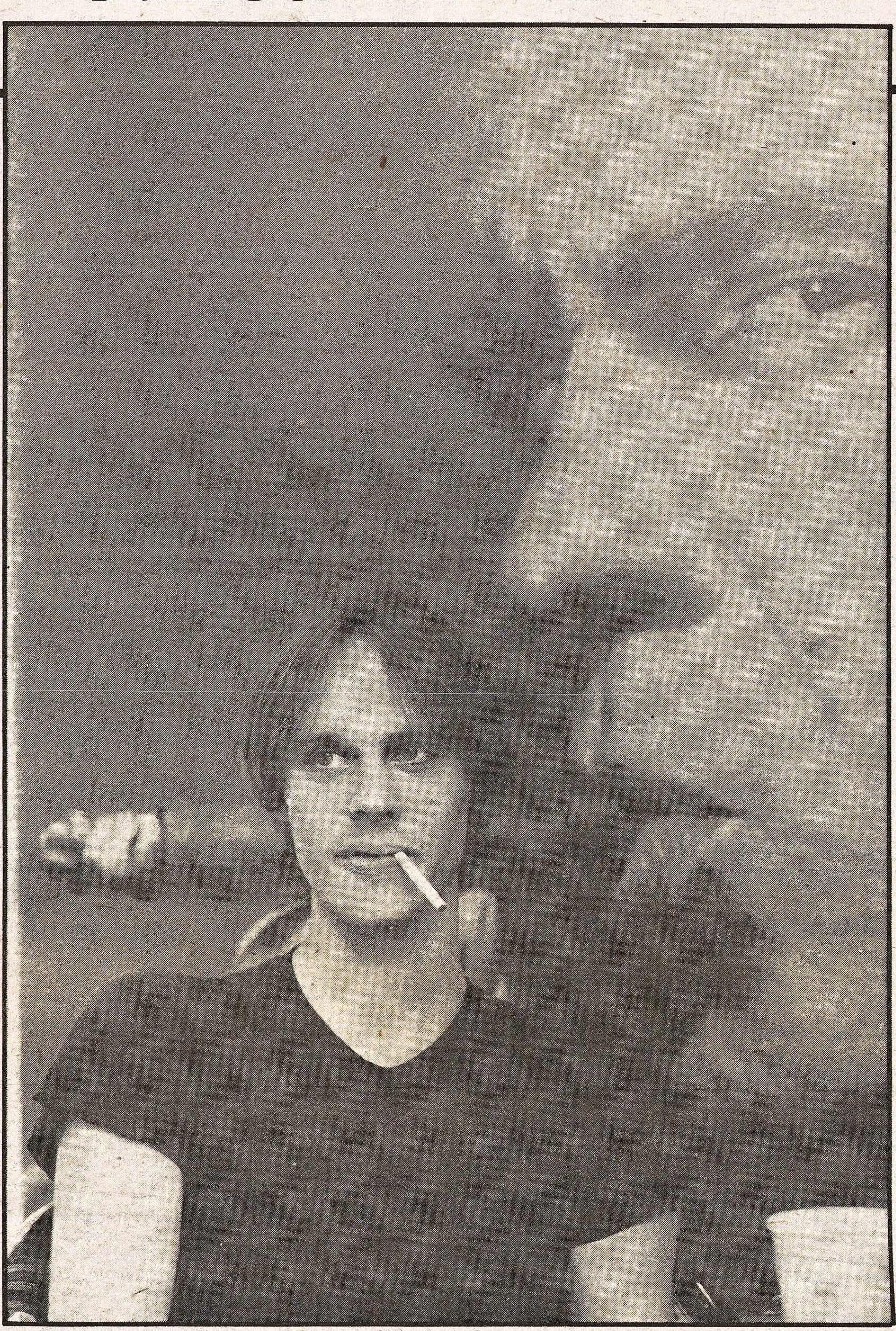


Happiness Is A Guitar Called Fender . . .

. . . And how you make original rock & roll with it in the late '70s is your problem. It's also TOM VERLAINE'S

Interview: RICHARD GRABEL

Pix: JOE STEVENS



The Player Weights Alone

When I walk in the room, Tom Verlaine looks up and laughs, a demented chuckle that might have come from a cracked hyena. I laugh too; it's a mutual recognition of the absurdity of the interview ritual. We've never met before, and now I'm going to attempt a vivisection of his life.

I've admired Verlaine and Television for years and when the band broke up last year, I felt a real sense of loss. They had been responsible for opening up CBGB's to rock and roll, creating a spawning ground for the rest of New York's "underground" bands. They had remained a standard-bearer for others, upholding an ideal of professionalism matched with experimentation.

So why did the break-up happen?

"It was basically just that I felt like doing something different," Verlaine says. "I told the members of the band as much and that was it. I think Richard Lloyd always wanted to be on his own also, have his own band and do his own songs."

Television had seemed the perfect vehicle for Verlaine's vision. There was never any doubt about it being *his* band, but Richard Lloyd and Tom Verlaine fit together. Verlaine's playing was often ethereal, a drawn-out tease, seeming to aim for a certain, unreachable mark and never getting there. Lloyd was a practitioner of a more classic, tension-and-release form of guitar showmanship. They complimented each other.

"That might have been true," Verlaine agrees "but I find it much easier working on my own. Or with Fred Smith, 'cause I'm not exactly on my own. Fred had a lot to do with the making of this new record.

"I mean, bands do break up, it happens all the time. It's no big thing. I'm very detached about the break-up of the band myself.

"The only thing I miss is the camaraderie of being on the road, the kind of humour you develop between the four members. But then again I haven't put together another band yet, so you never know.

"Television was a band of what you might call unique personalities. It was only held together by the hyper-emotionality of the members. When Fred Smith came in (replacing Richard Hell) he brought a sort of non-verbal balancing element into the whole thing. But it had to fall apart eventually."

But we have come here not to bury Television, but to praise Tom Verlaine. After the break-up, Verlaine retreated into semi-seclusion for a year, and slowly put together his first solo album. The result is totally heartening.

There were signs on Television's second album, 'Adventure', that Verlaine might be indulging his idiosyncracies a bit more than was good for his music. But the self-titled solo album picks up the thread of Verlaine's past work and extends it, through a more deliberate approach to the craft of recording, into a web of sound as exciting as Television's classic rockers with an added dimension of subtle seductiveness. The mesmerizing quality of Verlaine's instrumental sound, the evocative power of his lyrics are still very much there.

It could almost be a third, more sophisticated, Television album.

"Yeah, I think so too. That's natural. Whether you're writing for a band or for yourself, it's the same writing."

Was there something specific he had tried to accomplish that could not have been done in the context of the band?

"Well, it's already been observed that there is a simplicity in the drumming on the solo record that there wasn't with Television, and that's something I always wanted. I struggled with Billy (Ficca) about that, but, he's a very distinctive player, and I shouldn't be working with him if he has to play something he doesn't feel right playing. His playing tended to be a bit busier than I felt was appropriate for the songs. Of course, some of the things he did ended up being pretty cool."

Was doing all the guitar parts yourself a burden?

"I did that on a lot of the Television records too — for various reasons. I'm not trying to say that Richard Lloyd didn't make a contribution. Not at all, and I hope he doesn't take it that way. He knows what I'm talking about."

The only other musician featured on every track is Fred Smith on bass. Jay Dee Daugherty (Patti Smith Group) plays drums on six tracks. Bruce Brody (ex-Patti Smith Group) plays piano on one cut, Ricky Wilson (B-52's) plays guitar on another. How did you, Verlaine, work out recording with such a constantly shifting personnel line-up?

"It was just knowing the right guy for each tune. I know all the people that play on the record, and I would just call them up and say, 'can you do this?' I've played with Jay Dee before and I like working with him. Allan Schwartzberg, the other drummer, I met on the Peter Gabriel tour we did. He played on some of the posthumous Jimi Hendrix albums when they needed to over-dub some drums.

"This record was done in a very different way. We worked a couple of days a week, stretched out over four months. I really think that's the way to make records — work slowly, throw things out, get what you want. It's hard to do if you work with a big-name producer and an expensive studio. I was lucky in that we did it at a really neat little studio down in Soho (Blue Rock). I could call them up and say 'do you have free time tomorrow' and usually I'd get it. And the engineer knew what we were going for.

"To me, most producers aren't worth shit. Some bands really need them, 'cause they're not aware of time and pitch and other things you should have an ear for."

A recurring theme in Verlaine's lyrics is the use of images of females in an almost mythological, deified sense. There's 'Venus' for example on 'Marquee Moon' and on the new 'Flash Lightning' a woman is addressed as if she were a goddess. Was Verlaine conscious of this usage?

"Well, not really. But it doesn't sound like the idea is off the deep end, or out of the blue. I see what you mean."

I ask Verlaine if he could pinpoint any poetic or literary influences on his writing.

"When I was eighteen I did have a desire to know things or feel things that I wasn't getting in Delaware. So I came to New York. But if I was looking for something to read and I found a writer I admired, it wouldn't be in the sense of feeling 'that's what I want to do too.' I never wanted to imitate anything because it was hip or profound or funny."

But your first job in the city was as a bookstore clerk, and you did adopt the name of a French poet. So there must be some degree of literary influence.

"It was more that you discover something that you think is like yourself, without wanting to imitate it. In fact the first thing you do is write that off as something you won't do, because someone else had."

But we can talk about being inspired by someone without suggesting imitation. You obviously always sounded original.

"I don't know about that either. How original can you be picking up an electric guitar in the 1970's? There are some funny things I've read, though, especially this stuff about me sounding like Jerry Garcia. I've never heard Jerry Garcia in my life except for two songs, and I keep reading that I sound like him."

Perhaps, I suggest, it's the acid quality of Verlaine's music that provides the link in people's minds.

"I don't see what you mean by that exactly."

A lot of Verlaine's lyrics, I suggest have a hallucinatory quality that suggests an LSD experience.

"That's because . . . America's such a young country. There's an association of, what's the expression, 'expanded consciousness' or depth of experience with drugs. I've even seen that people have a fear of experiencing areas outside themselves unless it's within the safety measure of drugs. So that if something profound happens and it frightens you, you can write it off as a drug effect.

"It's an insidious thing that drugs do, they reinforce the ego in a sense. And if you know a lot of people that use a lot of drugs, as I do," (here Verlaine laughs that twisted hyena laugh again) "you'll see it's something they can never see in themselves. And other people can see it right away. I'm not saying that I don't use drugs or haven't used drugs or this and that.

"To me my songs are just about experiences. There's just an experience being portrayed there. It's not, uh, completely drug oriented."

Then there have been lyrics with an almost religious bent. There are lines in 'Marquee Moon's 'Prove It' that could have come straight out of a Buddhist poem, and lines in 'Breakin' In My Heart' that suggest a spiritual type of longing.

"Well, everybody's been thinking the same thoughts since the beginning of time, so that could be."

The answer is flippant, but I move on. If those songs represent a deep experience of some kind, 'Yonki Time', which closes the new album's first side, portrays the after-effects, where you try to reconstruct your sense of normality in the midst of chaos. The song is a quirky, stop-go call-and-response between Verlaine and a chorus of crazies who seem to have inexplicably invaded his house.

Verlaine starts to crack up almost as soon as I mention the song. Here we are hitting on a private joke he thinks is very funny.

I suggest that the song evokes the kind of disorientation or derangement of the sense that Rimbaud (a protege of the original Verlaine) trumpeted as a path to wisdom.

"Yeah. But those words have a negative quality. I don't subscribe to the belief that it's wise to be delirious, and I think probably Rimbaud didn't either a couple of months after he had the excitement of it."

What about Verlaine's vein of wry humor? On 'Venus' (again) there was that chorus of dumb 'didja feel low . . . Huh?', and on the new record there is 'Yonki Time', and the hilarious moment in 'Souvenir From A Dream' when a chracter appears out of nowhere, a rural hick giving directions to a lost driver. 'No mister this is Plattsburgh . . .'

"Those are just spontaneous things that happen, either in the studio or in rehearsal. That Plattsburgh rap I improvised in the studio. I had the song done and there was this one section that needed something, and I said 'well maybe I'll try this'. It's like a gas station attendant or something. It's just something from my past experience that came out.

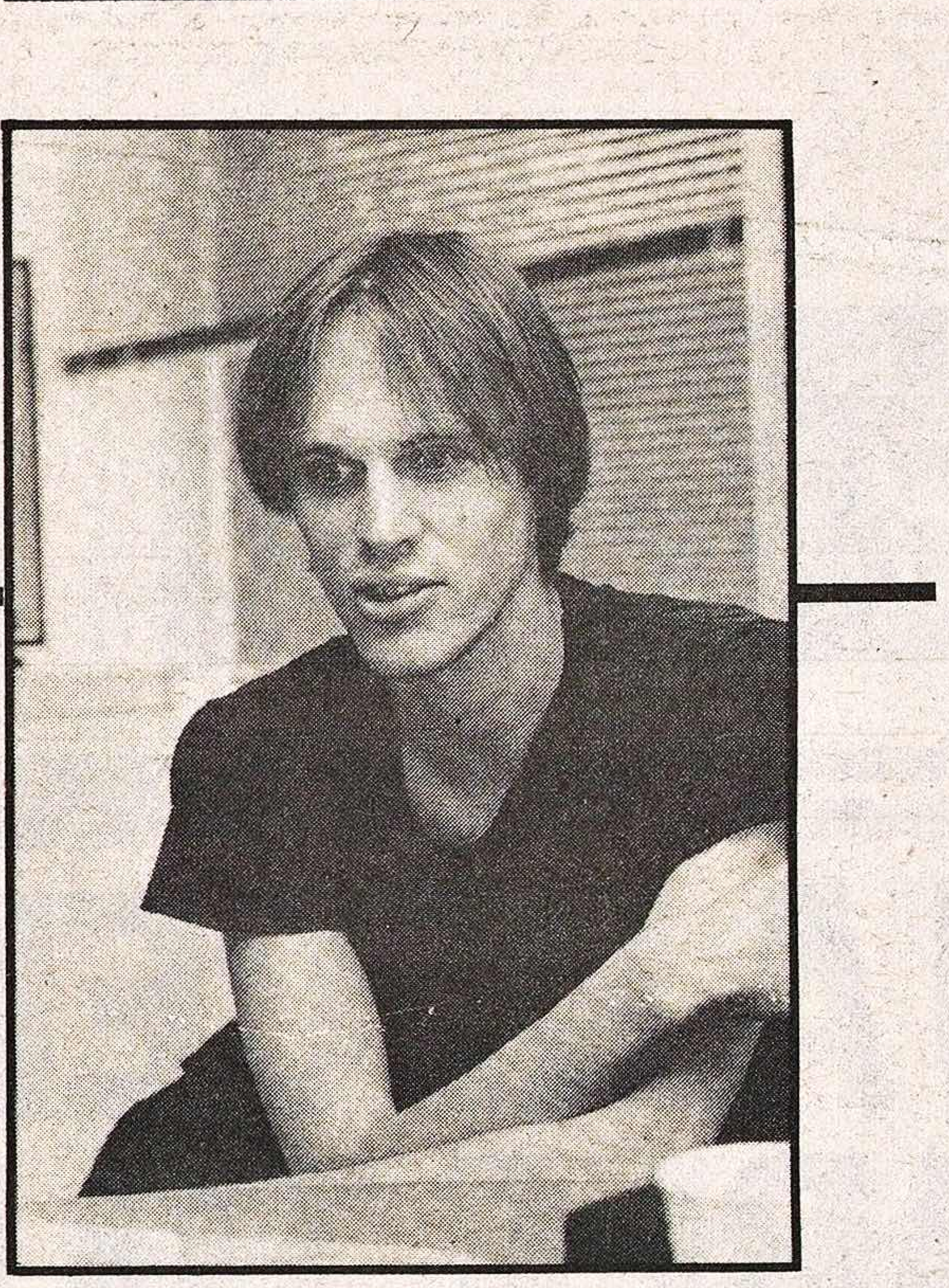
"Fred was producing my vocals. He was listening to this and cracking up, so I thought it must be good. I really didn't know what to expect."

'Souvenir's' almost Oriental-sounding keyboards and its characters floating in and out give it an Impressionist-cinema atmosphere. The song points up two divergent directions in Verlaine's music. One is the fast, guitar-fuelled rocker, the other is a move towards ethereal, dream-quality songs that began with 'The Fire' and 'The Dream's Dream' ('Adventure') and continues on the new record with 'Souvenir' and 'Last Night'. Verlaine objects.

"Those songs, when you think about it, aren't really dreamy. I call George Harrison's music dreamy. It has this lightness, a sense of melody that's different. Dreamy is 'The Moodsville Orchestra Plays Music To Get Kissy With' or something."

What about 'Last Night' — a slow, twilight song, built around orchestral piano and organ figures in a very dream-like manner?

"Even 'Last Night' isn't like Neil Diamond and Barbra Streisand. I had written a few



"I don't subscribe to the view it's wise to be delirious and I don't think Rimbaud did after the initial excitement."

songs for Television over the years, but they never seemed to work. The chemistry of that band never let them come across. 'Last Night' just comes out of desire to play a ballad. I like ballads when they're good, there just aren't too many good ones around. That Stones song 'Winter', that to me is one of the best things the Stones ever did. Most bands do ballads, it's not uncommon."

I ask about 'Kingdom Come'.

"It's got the same title as the old Television song, but it's not the same. There's a common prisoner analogy there, a 'working on a chain gang' kind of idea. But there might be some other meanings, like the stuff about the opening of the cells and 'the face of doom shining in my room'. You wouldn't see that in those 1930's social realist films about chain gangs."

Then there's 'Mr Bingo', which Max Bell suggested might be a poison pen letter to former manager Terry Ork.

"I don't have any given autobiographical intentions in writing lyrics. I'm not out to send a coded story to listeners about my own life. Of course, whether or not it happens is another story. It's possible that it could come out. In a sense you're always talking about your life."

Finally there's 'Breaking My Heart', a favourite from Television's early days, ending the album on a driving note and containing some of Verlaine's most emotional singing.

"I always wanted to do that one. I don't know why Television never got around to recording it. I decided a while back to put that on the next record, whether it was a Television record or a solo record."

So you had been thinking about recording solo before deciding to split up the band?

"Oh yeah. For a while."

I had wondered why some of the other favourites from the live repertoire went unrecorded. Verlaine's answer underlined the perfectionist stance he takes toward recording.

"A lot of them we'd try in the studio and they wouldn't work out. It was something about the timing of the band, the tempo. Something you wouldn't notice live that you do notice on record.

"We tried 'Ami Amore'. The original 'Kingdom Come' we never tried, it was too unstructured."

What about 'Fire Engine'?

"Oh yeah. That was the old 13th Floor Elevators song only in title. I could never figure out what the lyrics were, so I made up my own and took the title and the opening lines from them. I think there might be some recordings of it on a couple of demos we did. It might be on the Eno demo, and it might be on a demo we made with Alan Lanier of Blue Oyster Cult for Arista.

" 'Adventure' was the one song from the 'Adventure' album sessions that didn't make it onto the record. A lot of the lyrics ended up in 'Red Leaves' on the new album. The recorded version grew too long, and I was never happy with the vocals on it."

Will you revive any of those songs in the future?

"I might do 'Ami Amore'. I think I'll work with the music from the original 'Kingdom Come'. There's some real old stuff from the Neon Boys, which was me and Hell and Ficca, before Television. I can still remember some of that music and I might still like it. I'm not sure."

Back on the Television track, I ask why he thought the band never attained much commercial success, and whether it had disappointed him. Verlaine points a finger at American Radio, the most commonly-named villain in the New Wave Saga.

"When we came out radio would not give an ear. We were around before anyone was playing with that kind of abandon."

It was a matter of being before your time.

"It's an excuse to say that, but I don't know what other phrase to use.

"The thing about that band's sound . . . I was sick of hearing Gibson guitars on the radio. I wanted that clanky, distinctive Fender sound, cranked up Les Pauls and Marshall amps.

"Way back in '71 or '72, I ran an advertisement in the *Village Voice* classified ads for a Fender guitarist. And that was considered so strange that *Creem* magazine found it in the *Voice* and ran it as "The Ad Of The Month". I started getting all these calls from Detroit. This was way before Television."

The band's first album got a tremendous build-up in the English press, and, as often happens, the second one was widely judged disappointing.

"This thing about the English press doing that is an old story. I was reading Raymond Chandler's letters. He was more than just a detective novel writer, he had a unique vision of things. He was immediately picked up as a poetic writer in England, and then his second novel was slammed. So I didn't feel so bad. Nothing the press ever wrote about me got under my skin . . . except having untrue stories made up about me."

Will the new album overcome the problems of audience, or radio, resistance?

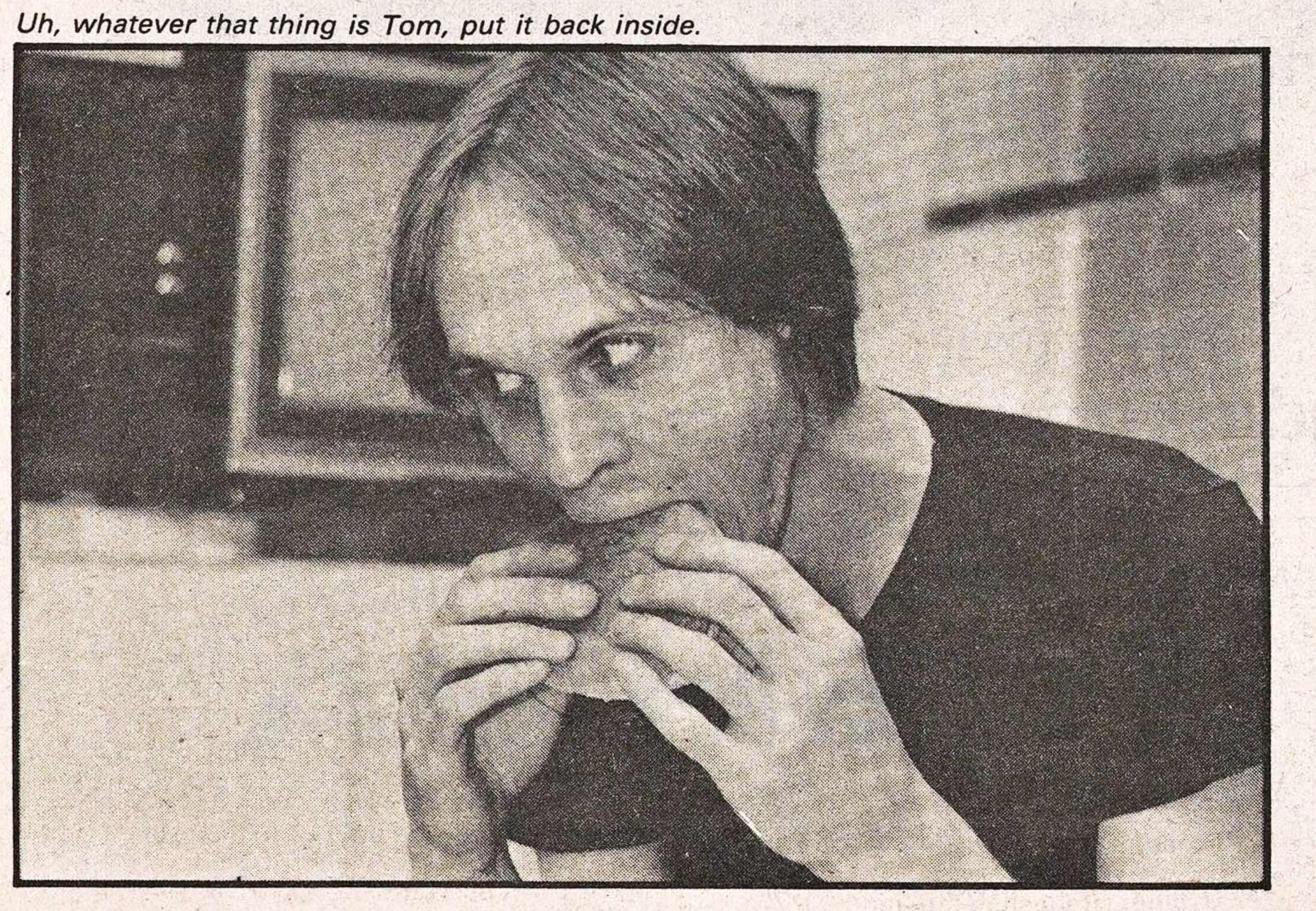
"I don't know. Maybe it's a sound that a lot of people just don't hear. It's not something that I really care about. It's just a sound that I like and that the people I work with like."

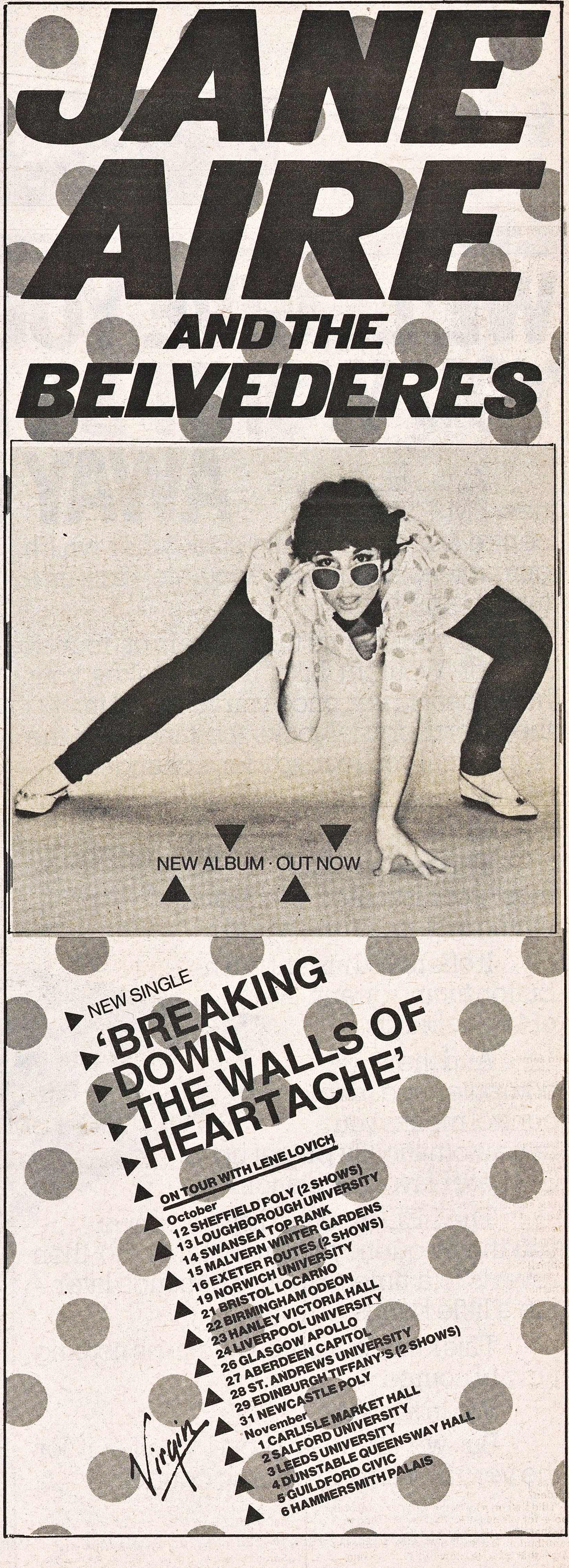
Is there an effect you'd like your music to have on listeners?

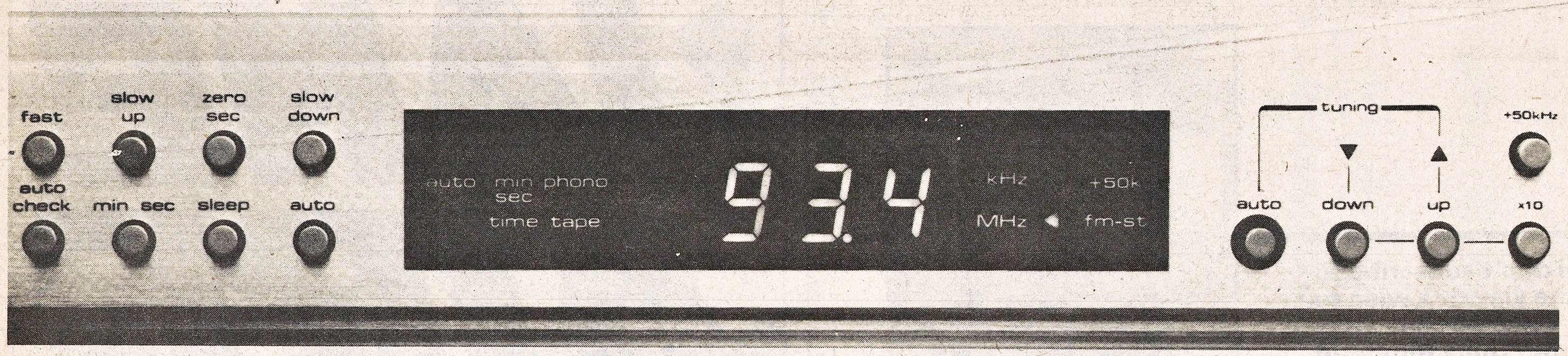
"You always hope that they're moved by it. That's what the whole thing is about, in a way. That's the human element."

■ *To page 73*

Uh, whatever that thing is Tom, put it back inside.







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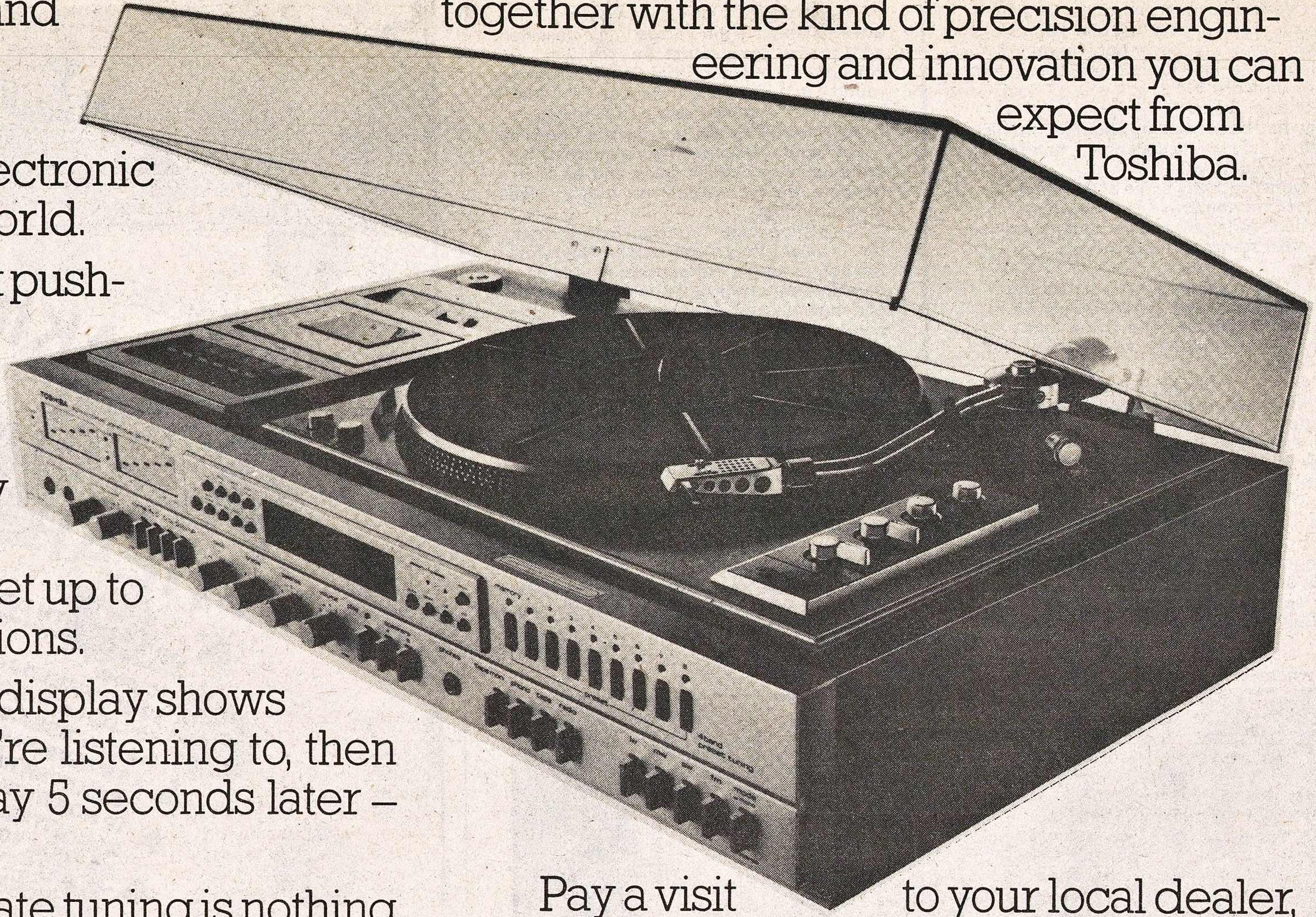

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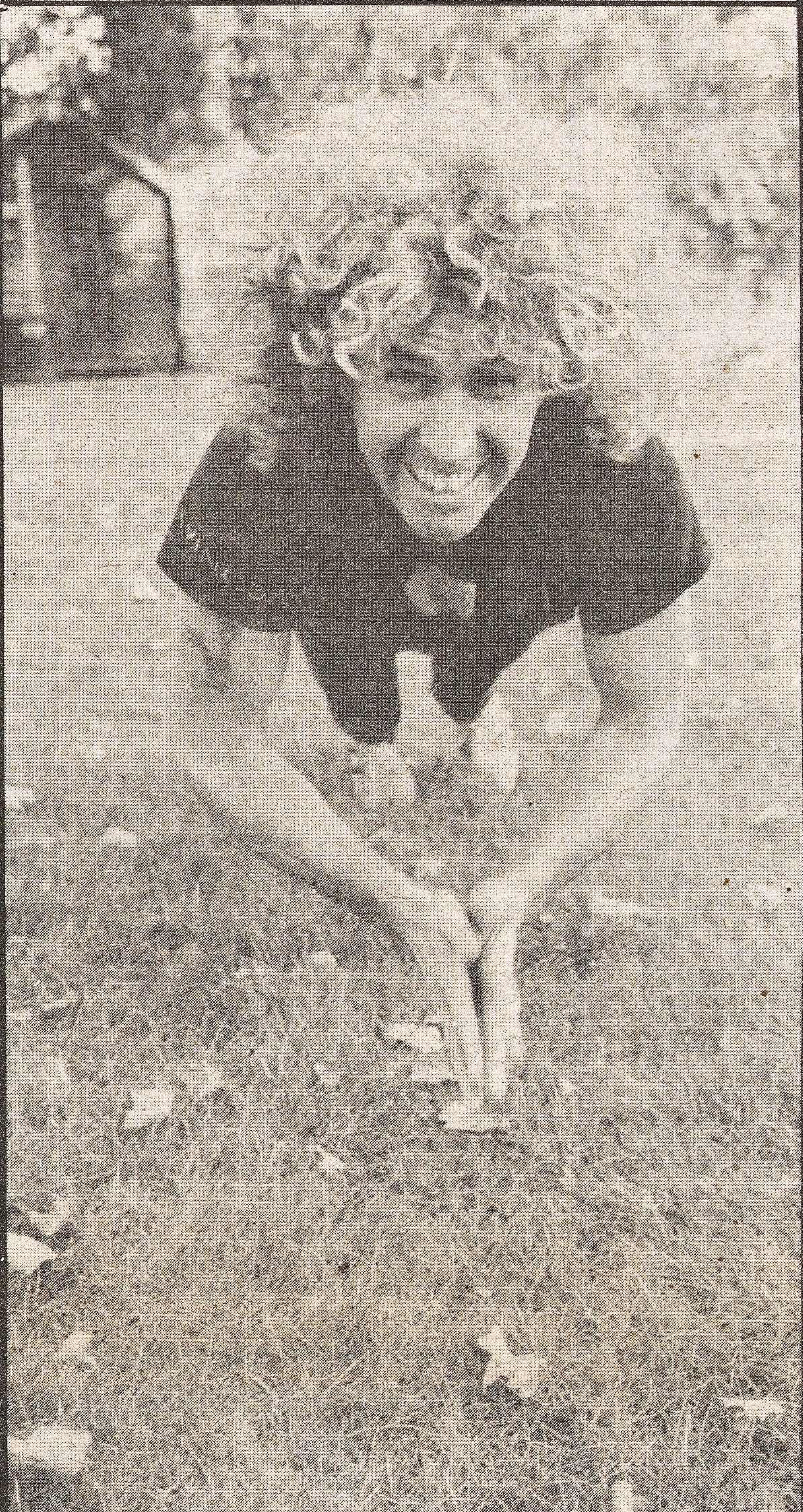
"When it comes down to physical fitness I am the baddest in the business. . ."



"I can knock off 50 push-ups for you right here — ten with each arm. . ."

"When I hit the stage, bring Ted Nugent out and I'll show you who can stand it the longest! He's good for ten or 20 minutes. . ."

WHO THE HELL IS SAMMY HAGAR?

. . .And why is he saying such horrid things about Ted Nugent? NME sent nine-stone weakling Paul du Noyer to arm-wrestle with the former Montrose frontperson and find out.

SAMMY HAGAR is a small, very fit, polite and friendly American heavy metal megalomaniac. He keeps smiling at me and telling me he wants to be "the biggest, baddest, meanest fucker in this whole business." Is this man having me on, or what?

Back when Sammy Hagar was a lot smaller, but growing upwards in a tough California steel town name of Fontana, his dad was a boxing champion who took to the bottle and got himself ruined. And Sam's dad would take him to meet strangers and say, "This is my son. He's going to be the Champion of the World."

And Sam was a son who believed what his dad had to say. Even as the years went by, and he'd decided it was cooler to be Elvis Presley than Rocky Marciano, and traded in the junior boxing gloves for an electric guitar, Sammy Hagar still planned on being Champ.

And today, at 30 years of age, the relaxed athletic man across the room admits to me that nothing's happened to make him change his mind.

"I was gonna live up to that. On stage it's like a bout every night, I have to outdo myself, I have to win, I can't get tired. If I get too tired then I'm not the champion and I want to be the best performer in rock and roll — and I'm still working on it.

"I'm better than most people and that's not ego, that's honesty. I've played with other bands and I've killed 'em and I'd challenge anybody. I think myself and my band, we're one of the best and I plan on getting better."

Pretty much, you might think, yer standard Yankee heavy metal motormouth ego-in-overdrive scripted recitation, to be chundered up for the benefit of the press as and when the dictates of the business publicity circus require. Except that when Sammy Hagar tells it you get the impression of a man who really believes in it all, who's optimistic rather than desperate, whose spirit is moved with confidence instead of just stewed in conceit. A real American, who secretly thinks that Presidents can still get born in log-cabins.

I find nearly all late-'70s HM music dreadful, and I can't count myself exactly ga-ga about this guy either, however many enraptured encores the Hammersmith Odeon had wrung out of him the night before. But I could listen to him talk all day.

"It's pretty much a macho thing; it's just a physical thing. Rock'n'roll has always been built around superheroes; when I was growing up, Elvis Presley, he was a superhero. The Rolling Stones, when they came to American, they were superheroes — you thought they were magic, if you touched them you were gonna get shocked or something.

"But it's all been built around a mystique, like the whole Hollywood thing has been 'Star': they build it and then you play the role. Well, I'm against that in the way the new wave scene's been pretty much against that. I don't wanna be a fake star, y'know?

"I wanna legitimately be the baddest fucker up there. When I hit the stage, bring Ted Nugent out and I'll show you who can stand the intensity the longest!" (Hagar does in fact plan an arm-wrestling contest with Nugent at some stage).

"Because I think most rock stars, it's all fake, a lot of it really is, like 'Hey, I'm so cool, don't touch me' and all that is bullshit.

"When it comes down to physical fitness, I am the baddest fucker in the busines." (Uh uh, he's off again) "I run 5 miles a day. I can knock off 50-push ups for you right here, 10 with each arm."

(He's got five arms, already?) "Anything you want — and if it comes down to that, on stage, it's physical energy that's gonna carry me through a two hour set and be able to give the people URGH!

"Ted Nugent's good for 10 or 20 minutes, then he's just standing in one place, it goes downhill from there. And that's the way a lot of groups are, they're not in good physical shape. So when I say I wanna be the baddest fucker I wanna be in the best physical shape — I'll be a superhero, but for *real.*"

MAKES MUSSOLINI sound like a wallflower at the church-hall dance, doesn't he? So let's rest our ear-holes a minute and reflect upon the Hagar saga as it stands to date.

After a few years' graft in minor-league West Coast outfits, our man teamed up with guitarist Ronnie Montrose, then fresh out of Edgar Winter's group, and together they formed Montrose — usually looked upon now as the prototype for most American HM of this decade.

Under supervision of heavy metal svengali Ted Templeman they cut a debut album in 1972 that's become a classic of its type, launching Montrose on the kind of hugely successful yet oddly anonymous career that's so characteristic of a lot of bands in the States.

But Sammy Hagar had other plans. As a singer, guitarist, songwriter and all-purpose frontman for the band, Hagar got less and less happy with a situation where Ronnie Montrose remained effective leader. Tensions developed into a split, and by the release date of album number two there was Hagar, gone.

Gone off, in fact, on a separate career that's already seen the release of five LPs under his own name, of which the live offering 'All Night Long' is almost certainly the best and of which the heavily-promoted 'Street Machine', coinciding with his UK visit, is the latest.

What distinguishes Hagar the blood-and-thunder mega-decibel stage performer from Hagar as he appears on record is a near-schizophrenic rift in his personality. Whilst the live shows are still vehicles for the old high-energy onslaught formula, fanatical, fast, frenetic et cetera, the 'Street Machine' LP presents an almost sensitive introspective side, more ambitious than anything I'd been led to expect.

Unsurprisingly, Hagar's tentative steps in this direction have left his HM constituency (in Britain at least) rather less than impressed, hence the emphasis of the present campaign upon Hagar's more gonzoid wild-man aspects — evidenced by the judicious inclusion of a live EP for 'Street Machine's' UK issue. Hagar himself will insist that he has no wish to let any of his "artistic things" get in the way of the scorched-earth stage-shows which he claims both he and his audiences prefer anyway.

And of course the strategy has worked. The relevant entrepreneurs, who banked on Britain's HM market being resilient enough to support an imported extra superhero, have indeed been proved correct. Sam's short reconnaissance tour of the country, culminating in the scheduled Hammersmith triumph, has seen him duly elevated to the domestic canon of denim-patch saints.

And as Sammy strikes on to world domination, his band are behind him all the way: bassist Bill 'Electric' Church, himself a veteran of Montrose as well as a couple of Van Morrison albums, former Edgar Winter drummer Chuck Ruff, and Gary Phil who plays the onstage role of Hagar's guitarist sparring-partner.

■ *Continues overleaf*

Pictures by Chris Horler

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SAMMY HAGAAARGH

■ From previous page

HAGAR'S APPROACH to his job as to his consuming passions of physical fitness and fast cars (their imagery invades nearly every song he plays), could be described as obsessively competitive. His outlook preserves a lot of the idealised pioneering ethic, beloved of right-wing sentimentalists — namely that winners can win without there being losers, that the success of one is ultimately to the benefit of all.

I don't buy it, but Sammy remains a resolutely likeable guy. So no, he doesn't see anything wrong in HM's undemanding creed — so long as the kids "get off" and find a reasonably benign figurehead to identify with, then life gets that much easier (cue the enormous farting sound of 3,000 safety-valves going off). And yes, he can appreciate that English rock critics must prefer music with a little more novelty to it, even sympathise with anyone trying to wield biro and notepad in among the boogie-happy throngs. "I know I shouldn't say this but, y'know, I don't think *I'd* like it down there when those kids are going crazy." But the London press, he reflects, can be very cruel . . .

So we talk about cars, about street machines.

"I'm a Trans-Am man right now . . . it's just a fun thing, it's being a teenager again. I guess I'm just holding on to my years, y'know, but I enjoy it.

"A car was how you went out on dates. You'd pick up a chick and go to a drive-in movie theatre and you get popcorn and coke or you drink a beer or whatever and you watch about 10 minutes of the movie and then you get in the back seat and it's like a whole tradition, y'know? I'd say that 60 per cent of the girls in America lose their virginity in the back seat of a car. That's definite!"

We all laugh. I wonder should I be nudging the talk towards something more 'relevant', but then think "sod it" and sit back.

"Sixteen — boy, that's the dangerous age! Cos that's when all the guys get cars and that's your whole ambition, to find a chick that you can fuck in the back seat. The girls don't have a chance, it's one guy after the other. He'll ask one chick out and try to fuck her and she slaps your face and you have this wrestling match so then she'll never go out with you again so then she goes out with this next guy who does the same thing so finally she's either gonna give in or become a lesbian. That's teenage America!"

That and fighting, he says. Strange way to get along, I think. And Hagar's quick to distance himself from all that now — well, from the violence, at least — though from the twinkle in his eyes I'd guess that his disapproval isn't too severe.

"It would be unhealthy in the respect that if I didn't have the stage, to go out there and be the macho prick ass-hole on stage, I'd just be as belligerent and crazy as I wanted to be. I'd be going to bars and getting into fights and trying to show that audience that 'I'm the baddest fucker who ever lived'.

"I figure my father was a fighter — it goes back to my childhood — a professional boxer, a very physical man. He didn't know anything about using the mind, just your hands and your back. So being raised that way, idolising my father, I thought 'I'm gonna be tought when I grow up'.

"And then there's something inside, I guess, that makes me wanna be powerful. I'm not real big, so if I wanna kick some guy's ass I'm gonna have to be just faster and in better shape and when he gets tired — then I'll kill him!"

There's no coulda been's about it — Sammy Hagar is most definitely A Contender.

Come and get him, Ted . . .

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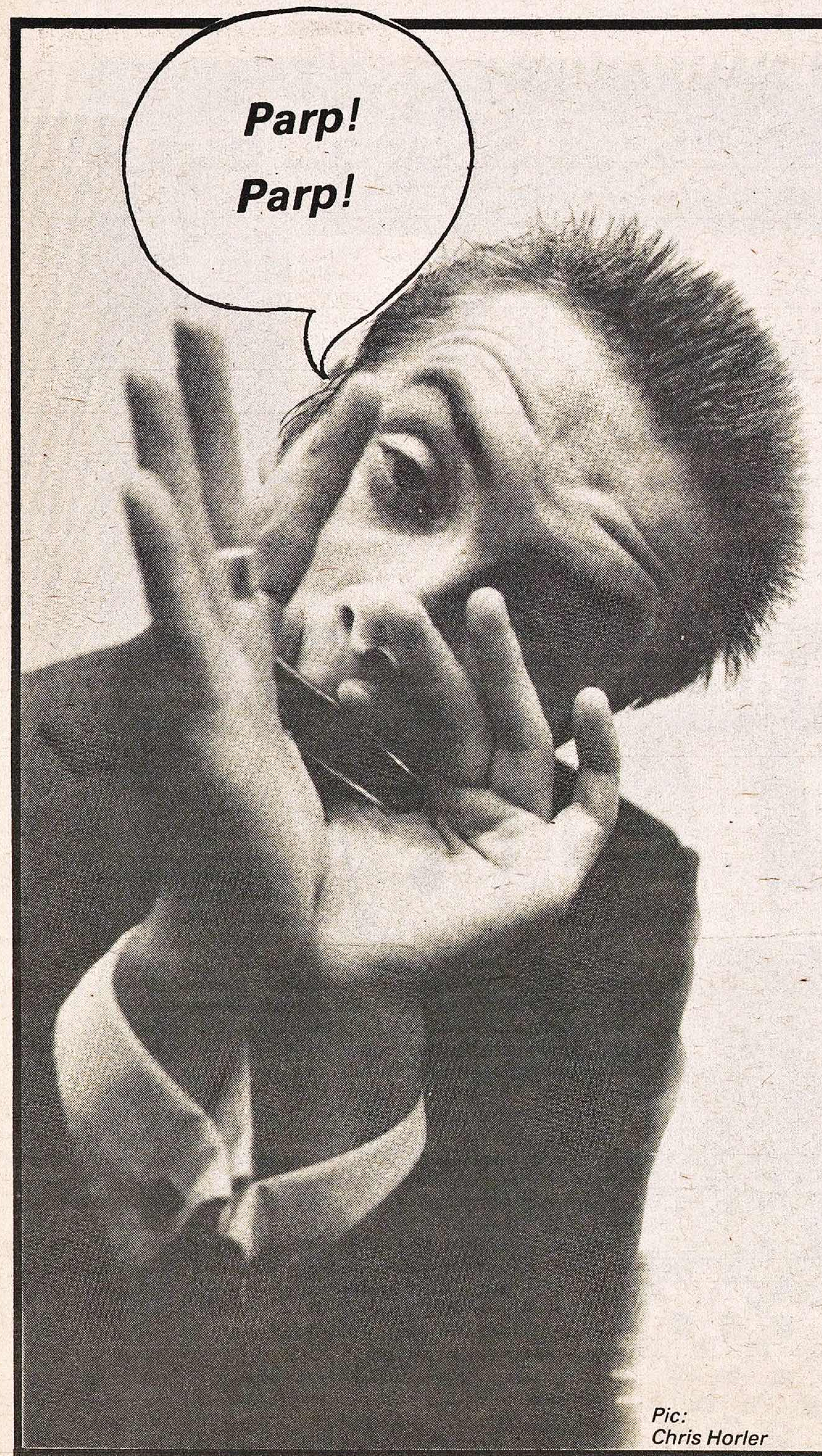

Pic: Chris Horler

Ricky Who?

From the depths of Birm-ing-ham, U. of K. comes Ricky Cool, a 53-year-old blues enigma

SO THERE I was sitting down the Hope & Anchor of a Thursday night with me pint of lager and a few mates, musing on the current state of affairs and general lack of excitement around this patch of North London, when through the smog of voices, strangled cries of the jukebox, and clinking glasses, usually sufficient lagging against the sound of music downstairs, came the distinct strains of American blues.

Intrigued, I paid my 75p and stumbled down the unlit stairway, where I always nearly break me neck, to find out what it was all about, and there's this geezer right, calls himself Ricky Cool (and his band The Icebergs) looking a bit flash, like one of them Rockabilly Rebels or something, mouthing it off about back in the States in 1949 when he played in a band called The Kings of Rhythm, led by Ike Turner.

Now he only looks about 24 years old, but you never can tell these days can you, so I listen anyway.

"Weell, I remember teaching Ike his first few chords on the geetar," he says, "and he was always thankful to me for that. Never did pay me but he always was thankful. So we're gonna do a number of his now for ya, 'Rocket 88' " — and they launch into the raunchiest, gutsiest rock/rockabilly music I've ever heard.

This guy's dancing all over the place, laughing, singing and riding on the music like he's in an oldtime Chicago nightclub, and blasting away on his harmonica till his face burns red with exertion, and the band are right behind him, saxophone, guitar and pedal steel bouncing off the rock steady rhythm section and hitting you with all the punch of a straight Tequila — I know all about that.

"Let's go back to Texas, back to the ol' Lone Star estate where I was born and raised," Ricky announces, setting the scene sort of thing. "Gonna do a little number for ya now that I used to play a long, long time ago, with Bob Wills in a group called The Backcrust Dough Boys back in 1943, 'San Antonio Rose'."

Ricky joins in on saxophone, and the whole of the Hope for once is alive and rocking with him.

"So here we are ladies and gentlemen, the moment you've all been waiting for, when ol' Ricky plays a little slide geetar. I guess you might have heard of a guy by the name of Ry Cooder" (we all cheer, getting into the spirit of things like) "well Ry, you might not know this, but Ry plays the Ricky Cool style of slide guitar. What he hasn't got, of course, is one of the greatest slide guitars you can possibly buy, the limited edition, ladies and gentlemen, Fender Codgercaster — just listen to this," and he runs through a few jangling warbling riffs that sound pretty good to me, and I think well maybe he's not all mouth after all.

They finish off with an old Harry Webb number — "Ladies and Gentlemen", Ricky says, "I think he deserves a round of applause — my old friend Cliff Richard," and I'm glad he says that, because I've never heard of Harry Webb — "alright boys, 1234 . . ." and they plunge into a punk version of 'The Young Ones', bringing is all plummeting back to the modern world, whereupon we all shuffle back to our tables and our pints, and are back where we was before.

Well, five or ten minutes later I'm still thinking on his skill with that bottleneck, and sizing up what me and my mates think are possibly some pretty tall stories, when the man himself wanders by, and I suggest a few jars, just sussing him out like. He pulls up a chair and says a few words, and, to our surprise we discover he's not American at all, but a bleedin' Brum.

"We got together about three years ago, in Birmingham, originally as Tricky Dicky and the Wildcats", he said. "There was ol' Tennessee Stud (Stuart Johnson) on pedal steel, El Rancido (Mick Howsan) on guitar, Steve 'TV Slim' Dolan on bass, Johnny Spinetto on drums, and myself, Richard Rogers, on vocals, harmonica and occasional sax.

"We were all interested in blues and C&W, particularly Bob Wills and Louis Jordan, and so western swing was an easy step to take, and then city blues came next. We quickly built up a following, got a residency in a pub in Birmingham, and before we knew it were featured on The Revolver Show, Radio 1, and local TV and radio.

"The next step was trying to get a record deal, which we need more than ever now because we're so much in debt, but it wasn't that easy, we soon discovered."

This surprises us, because, like I said before, it's not the kind of music we're used to hearing round these parts, nor any other part of the country I would have thought, and it'd come as a refreshing and enjoyable change tonight.

"They say it's more a live thing, y'know, with the American accent and all that.

"Well it fits in with the music, doesn't it?" Ricky explained. "Plus I used to wear a gold lame suit on stage at one time. And it's better than saying 'Thanks very much and for our next number', isn't it?" We all nod. "And no I'm not an actor, I'm a woodwork teacher actually."

Now this would instantly put anyone out of favour with us lot, teachers rarely being up to any good, and never to be trusted, but ol' Ricky Cool seems a pretty sincere sort of bloke, and we decide he's alright and buy him another pint. With talent, skill and a sense of humour like he's got we reckon he's gotta make it soon, and we'll be first in line for a pint when he does.

DEANNE PEARSON

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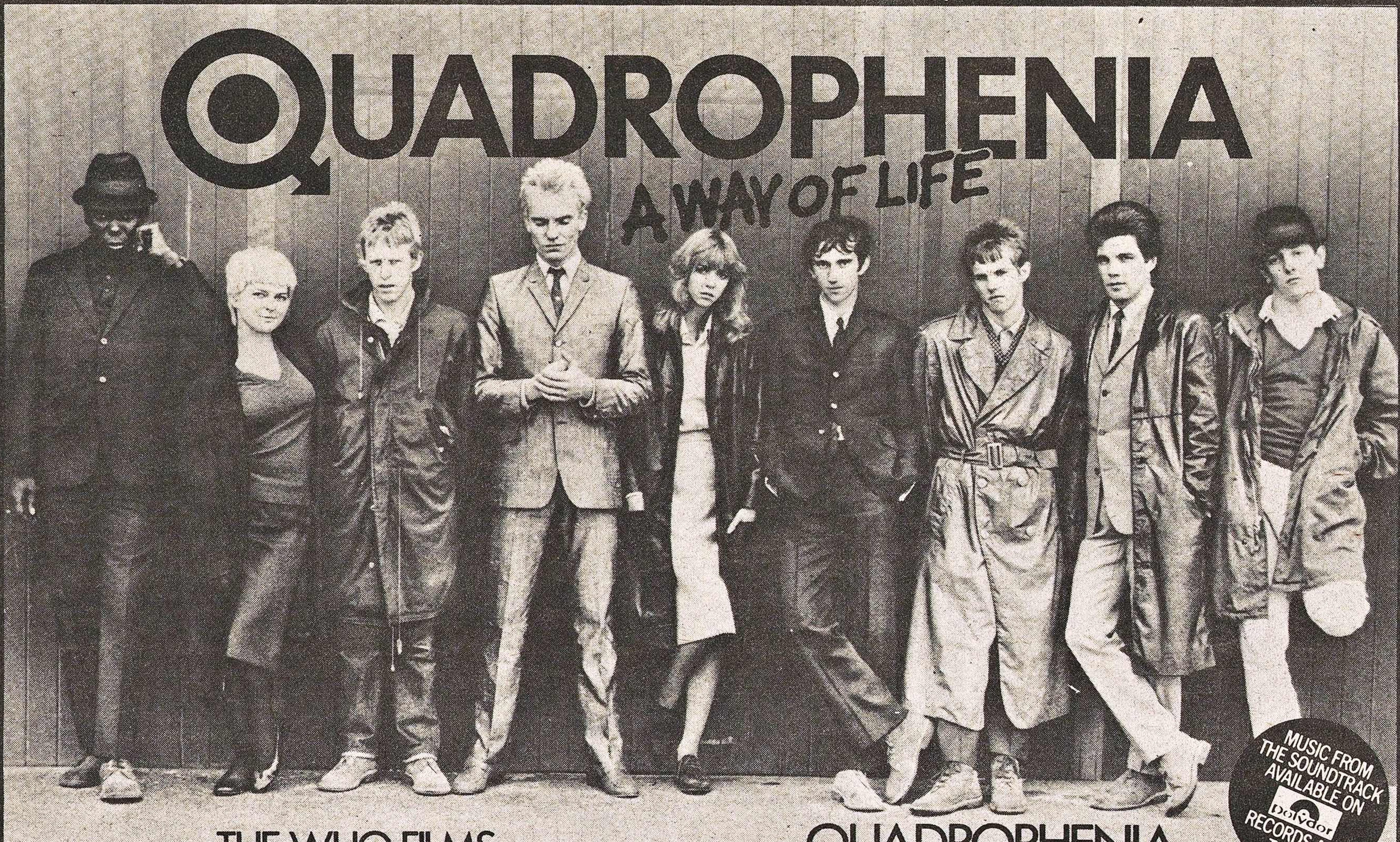

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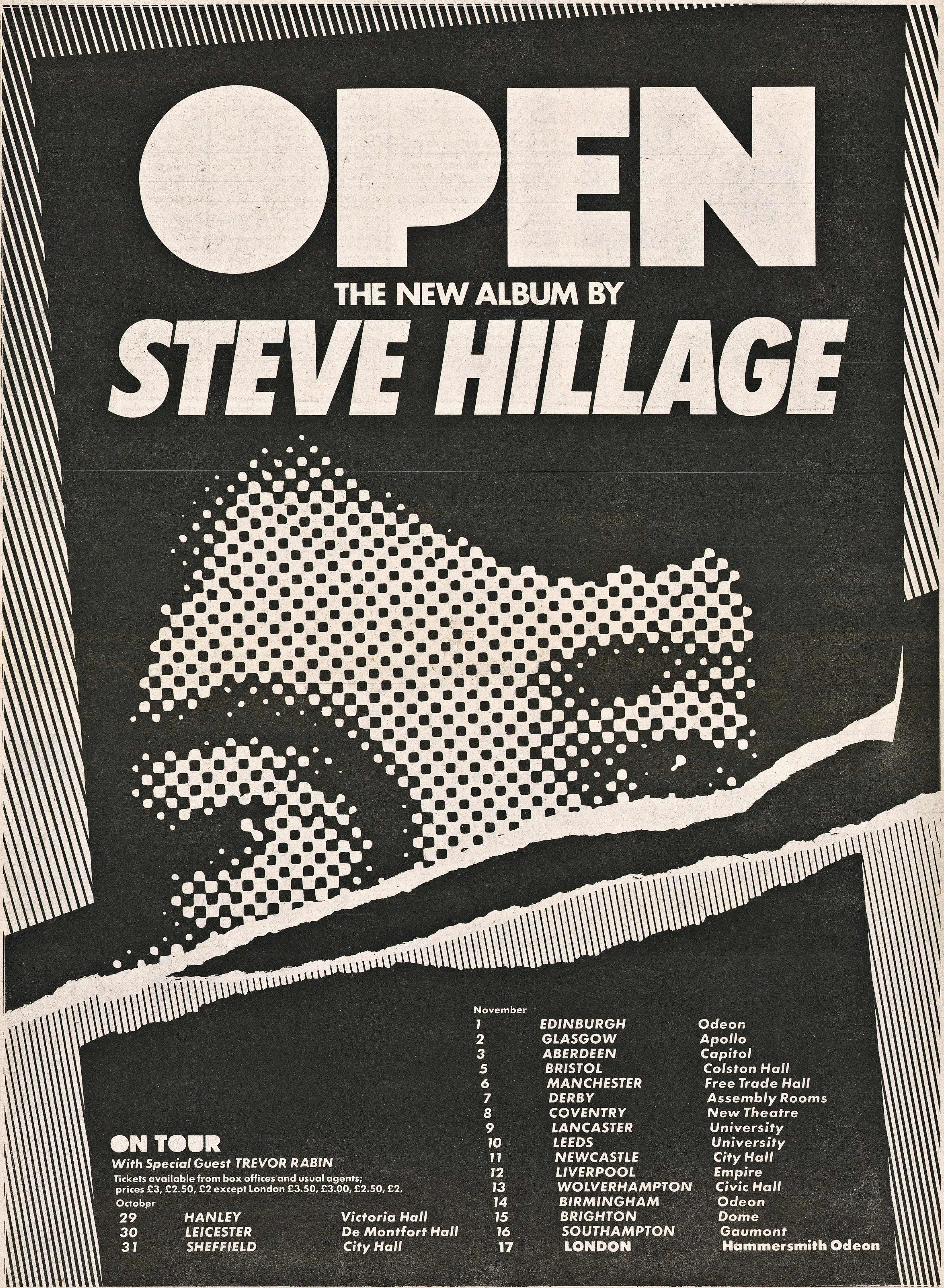
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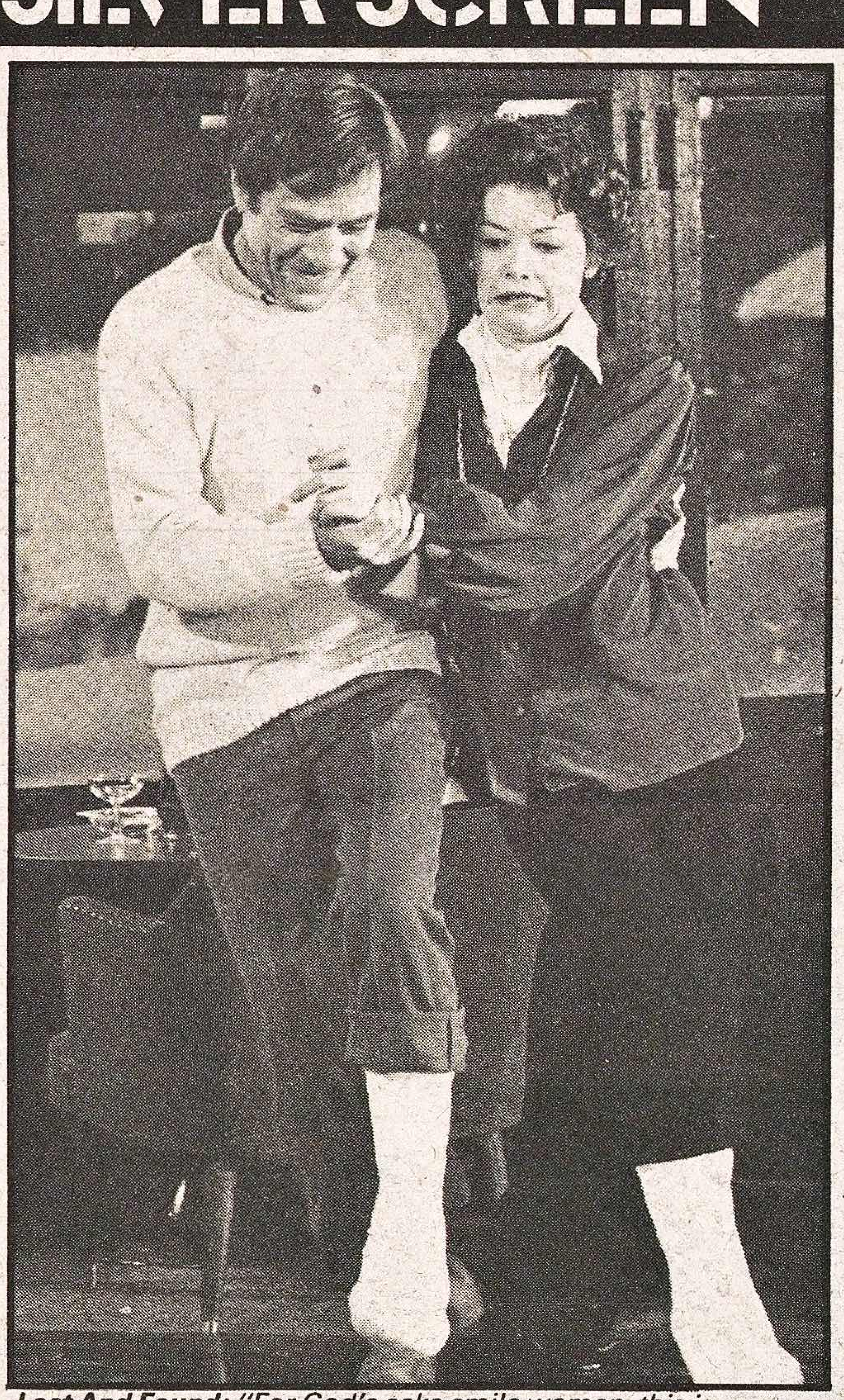

Lost And Found: "For God's sake smile woman, this is supposed to be funny."

A touch of crock

Lost And Found
Directed by Melvin Frank
Starring Glenda Jackson and George Segal
(Columbia)

LOST And Found is built on the premise that you'll fall in love with the person who breaks your leg. An unlikely notion I'd have thought, even if you grant the hypothesis that most people who inhabit ski resorts will end up on their backs one way or the other.

In fact, Glenda Jackson and George Segal contrive to fall over each other five times during the first 20 minutes of this film, after which — having thus exhausted his panache for wacky, slapstick humour — director Melvin Frank allows proceedings to settle into a cosy, silly, domestic routine occasionally, but very rarely, enlivened by a smartass joke or some unbelievably crass 'comic' ploy.

For instance, we have the talkative, 'philosophical' taxi driver whose distillation of the sum of human knowledge is that "life is a crock of shit" — pregnant pause — "but it's all we've got". Or that age-old set-piece where the drunken wife ruins the important dinner party by insulting the pompous intellectual guest. Even Homer had more up-to-date material.

Frank simply trots out these stereotypes without one jot of style, imagination or irony — as if he assumed their mere appearance would induce helpless mirth in the same way it was once believed a very glimpse of the Union Jack would occasion instant patriotic apopolexy in the observer.

Jackson and Segal practically repeat their roles from the mis-named *A Touch Of Class*. He doesn't so much ooze as leak his customary weak-kneed charm; she throws off another of her shrewd but shrewish middle-aged women. The most demanding thing either has to do is fall over, and I've still seen far funnier efforts on *Match Of The Day*.

Lost And Found may emulate life in one respect, but at least it's not all we've got. Which is small consolation for such a big crock.

Graham Lock

Steppin' Out
Written and directed by Lyndall Hobbs
(20th Century Fox)

RECOMMENDING a film that is excruciatingly bad on every conceivable level might seem a rum business, but if you're making plans to see *Alien* (and if you aren't, you should be), you have little to lose by arriving early to catch its general-release partner, *Steppin' Out*.

The sort of thing that makes those old *Look At Life* shorts seem weighty and intelligent in comparison, *Steppin' Out* is a half-hour documentary that ineptly asserts that Youth is once again alive and well and living in London (and, come to think of it, Dunstable too) and concentrates largely on the mod revival.

It isn't really the London that you or I know, but an Ad-man's world. This is hardly surprising. After all, the original Swinging London concept emanated from New York, so it's perhaps only fitting that its regeneration should be consummated by Lyndall Hobbs, an Australian.

Parallels are drawn with those supposedly heady days of the mid-'60s, which enables the producers to rehash much familiar monochrome from that time. But can you believe that while we are watching age-old shots of The Beatles, the soundtrack is offering music by The Who?

Several representatives of this particular new wave air their thoughts which, by the law of averages, yield a couple of quotes that help to make the half-hour a not-entirely wasted one. "I wouldn't say I was the first Mod," concedes one of those interviewed in Carnaby Street, "but I was the first down West Ham"; though the grimmest message is offered by the girl who admits "Really I'd like to have been a hippie, but they haven't come back yet."

What the film does have going for it is its contemporaneity. The soundtrack includes 'Reasons To Be Cheerful', Roxy Music's 'Angel Eyes' and Teiex's 'Rock Around The Clock', all current sounds when the film opened. In addition, there is live action from Secret Affair and the Merton Parkas, each performing their latest singles; should either of those bands survive into the '80s, then this movie, shallow as it is, will no doubt be recalled affectionately in ten years' time.

Bob Woffinden

ARCHIVE FUN

"OOOH, leave me alone you big bully or I'll scratch yer eyes out!"

Yes, well never mind the damsel in distress, just who is that ferocious hunk in the natty T-shirt? Those rugged features, that burly frame, that horrible grimace — surely they couldn't belong to the nephew of a distinguished English film director, to a young man who went on to act with those great British thespians Glenda Jackson and Vanessa Redgrave, to an actor who graced such notable slices of celluloid as ***Triple Echo, Women In Love, The Three Musketeers*** *and* ***The Curse Of The Werewolf,*** *to a bloke who can drink Lee Marvin under the table and beat all-comers at arm-wrestling? 'Fraid so. 'Cos even if* ***The Lady In The Car*** *does,* ***We'll Never Forget Whatsisname.*** *He was always one of* ***The Jokers*** *but now* ***The Party's Over*** *— just don't put* ***The Assassination Bureau*** *on to us,* ***Oliver!*** *Just one thing — what does 1/3 mean and (sorry, two things) where can we take out a subscription to Master Detective? All that stuff about 'Men, Money And Murder', 'Ordeal By Fire' and 'Terror Behind Bars' makes us feel as tough as what you are.*

HANNIBAL BROOKS

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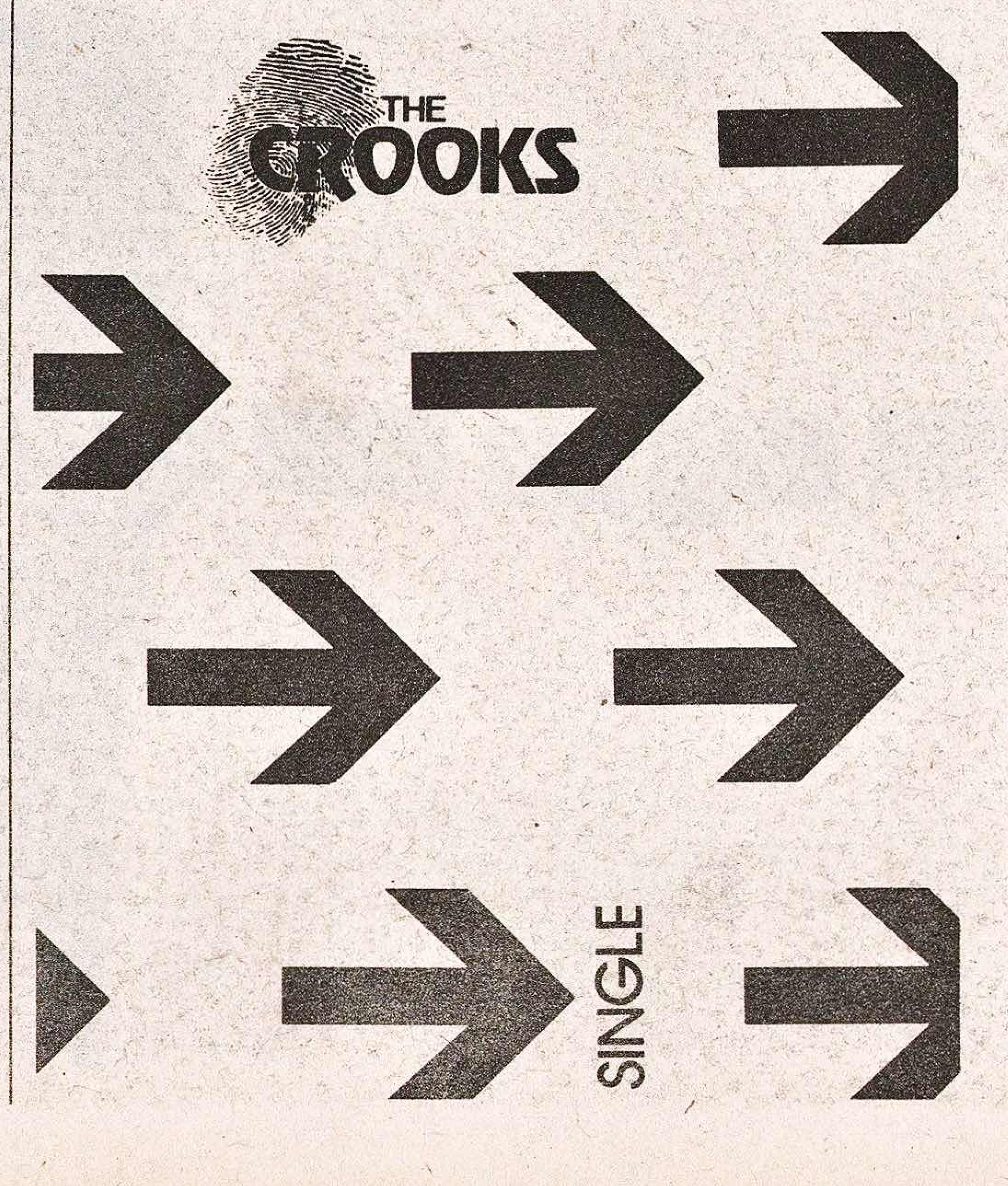

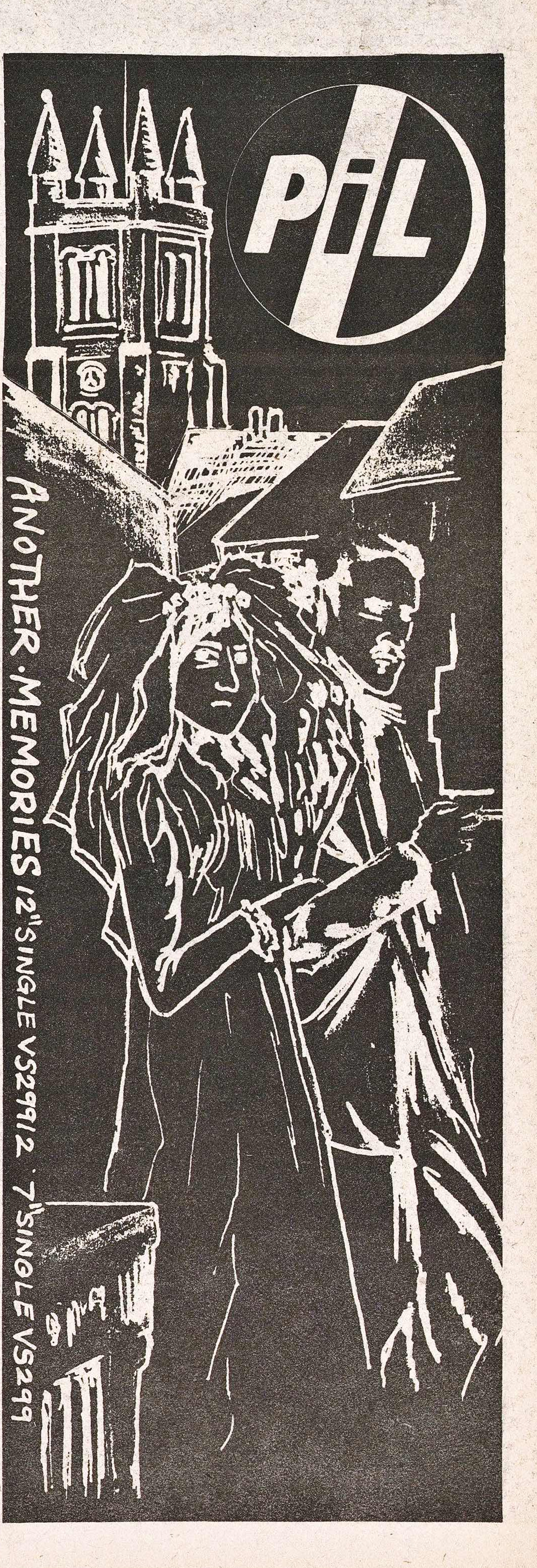

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Clash USA '79

The Last Gang In The West Leaves Town

Details: PAUL MORLEY **Photography: PENNIE SMITH**

DETAILS: The Scene.

The Clash on tour of America. There's a glamorous image, with a confident, crusading edge to it.

The Clash: a lot of hope and responsibility there.

America: it still means a lot.

Clash's current six week coast to coast tip to toe tour of the United States Of America is their first major assault upon the stupefied standards of the land. It follows a few months after their exploratory dip into the stagnant, dense culture waters of America — a six date trip definitively chronicled by Joe Strummer's own frantic pen in the *NME* of March 3rd, 1979.

The tour — titled 'Take The Fifth' — possesses a resistance and direction that sets it well apart from the soft centred, soft hearted British invasion of Sniff 'N' The Tears, The Records, Ian Gomm, Bram Tchaikovsky, et al. The Clash are in America following destiny. The tour has taken on the spirit of a quest. The Quest: abstract words with a definition much the same as 'punk'. Newchange and choice . . .

In America this is about working towards less Kansas, Styx, Foreigner and Boston and more reggae and Clash on the radio; towards replacing the glazed look in the eyes of American youth with a glint of purpose and passion, towards staying alive, towards saying 'look out'. The Quest is a battle requiring non stop concentration, humour, flexibility and understanding. Blind faith, even.

Joe Strummer will refer to the unknown American audience as the great grey people, maybe something ultimately unreachable. "You know how we can get through here," Strummer will reflect, "I want to get through to the person in high school; you know, all the people that we've got to in the cities, they're sussed, right, it's the kid in the high school who doesn't know anything about it even yet. I hope ultimately we get through to him. Because he's the one at home in his bedroom, he's got Kansas albums and racks of Kiss and all that, and I feel like he should have a dose of us."

But perhaps, paradoxically, it's a victory that The Clash must never complete: "To sell something like Rod Stewart here, that's going to mean that we reach all the nurds, they're gonna have to go out and buy a copy, right, and they ain't even gonna do that because they never heard of us . . . but maybe that's why we are never going to get there; because once you get there, you're fucked. You know what I mean? Maybe we'll never get there."

Clash USA '79

"If all we've achieved is someone wanting my autograph than we've gone wrong."

From previous page

It's an end — commercial success — that The Clash shove in a corner. "If we were just going to be another Stones or another Who," Strummer told a Detroit newspaper, "it would be a bit of a bore. That's why we're going to try and turn left where we should've turned right, y'know."

The Clash try to live from day to day. The Clash are in America for better or worse; it's a shot-gun wedding of sorts. They are committed to convincing America that there is something wrong. There is no easy way.

I spent nine days with the group, the first part of their stint, about a fifth of the total. I glimpsed the pain and pressure, a little bit of the pleasure, shared a lot of the monotony and frustration. There was some jealousy, but ultimately a gladness that I wasn't in what they were in. Mixed up with love, admiration, confusion; that's this writer's cocktail.

The Clash have surrounded themselves on the tour with a lot of people. Girlfriends Gabrielle (Strummer), Dee (Headon), Debbie (Simonon); publicist, clown and one of the most important people in rock'n'roll, Godfather of the Quest Kozmo Vinyl; photographer Pennie Smith; cartoonist Ray Lowry; DJ Barry Myers; personal roadie Johnne Green. Already this circus of creativity has been reported as unnecessarily unwieldy — the way music papers transmit fragmented fractions of truths that negatively pad out the glamour image is one of the things that frustrated me about the tour. These fellow travellers were all invited on to the tour, were not a buffer, and did not cramp The Clash. If energies were split and diverted that's the only way it could be. At least the energy was *there.*

The Clash love to be with people, and shared their touring coach to bursting point with no complaints. They feed off others' energies. This is one reason so many on the road adventures of The Clash turn up in the pop press. My own presence, if unwelcome, would have been quickly discarded. The Clash are hardly tolerant or submissive.

Reports have indicated that such an unwieldy entourage suggests confusion. Of course The Clash are confused. In such unnatural circumstances who wouldn't be? This confusion is more positive than harmful. There is nothing slick or pre-planned about The Clash, who were literally living, financially, from day to day on the tour, not able to be certain that hotels two days ahead were booked. Reports that the group were smothered in money from Epic are silly and laughable; at one point the group was forced to seriously discuss coming home.

There is still confusion over Clash management. On the tour, at certain points, up to four people would be telling the individual members of the band what the next move was. This caused misunderstanding, a lot of waiting, a lot of muttering under the breath. It emphasised that The Clash are not a business; they are still an amateur organisation, and whilst this can be frustrating it's positive in that the essence of Clash is not set, sealed and unchanging. There is nothing certain about The Clash. Nothing comfortable. No chance to sit back.

Joe Strummer, Topper Headon, Paul Simonon and Mick Jones live The Clash. Touring America is a long hard job with no distinction between work and play, where things constantly shove into the mainline preoccupations of travelling, soundchecking, sleeping and performing. Distractions like round the clock newspaper / radio / tv

interviews. Distractions like attempting to package, title, and even mix their third LP, knowing at the back of their minds that decisions often made snappily or jokingly will stick around them for a long time to come.

Distractions like fighting to insist that the record will be a double for the price of a single, knowing that if their demands get ignored by faraway CBS they will be the ones to face the cynical derision.

The third LP is going to contain 18 songs. Songs they took to writing as part of the recovery from the spiritual low they

experienced at the beginning of the year. "Black music, black vinyl, black and white cover."

But there's nothing about The Clash that is straightforward. They concentrate on biringing these long, tall and wide new songs into the set, thinking about the forthcoming release, and meanwhile their American label Epic have finally released the first LP, with the addition of a few recent songs to contrive a 'greatest hits' package. The Clash find themselves unwittingly and unwillingly having to promote relics from the past — that was that and now its now — songs that have a part in their set but little relevance in their new way of thinking.

Not only that, but whilst The Clash are away, CBS will play. CBS thought it would be a good idea to release the USA package in Britain. Full price and all that. The Clash are forced to fight this nonsense.

"What a threat," snaps Strummer, "just to pay for this jaunt!"

"Typical of them to try and trick us when we are away," snarls Jones. "They always do that. They thought that they could make it look like the British fans would want the record and then it would pay for us to come over here. We're not going to do that! How would that look? To the kids at home, some kid in Bolton: 'Oh yeah, I'm paying for them to ponce about in America' . . . so we've successfully put the block on that.

"We just said we would come back home if they did that," expands Strummer. "We were willing to go home straight away. Fuck it, we'd go home, bollocks to the rest of it."

On it goes. A ball of confusion bouncing wayward but forward. Vague ideas about visiting Mexico and Cuba are brough into play, introducing more problems. The curiosity of The Clash will never be curbed. Their ills of desire will never be cured. The reputation thickens, for better or worse.

This yet-another-lengthy *NME* support of The Clash is subjective details of the extent of their commitment, a commitment that is often nothing more than a commitment to merely continuing. It is a report on the new responses; The Clash truly never look back.

It is a glance at four totally different characters who came together, became the strongest survivors of the punk purge because of spite, the ability to expand, the odd accident, a lot of stubborness and fear. They have had to struggle constantly with compromises, their naivity, their impatience, the scorn of those who are convinced that they've failed in their 'task', the sycophantic glee of those who observe in the group's desperation and dillettantism and arrogance the saviours of something or other.

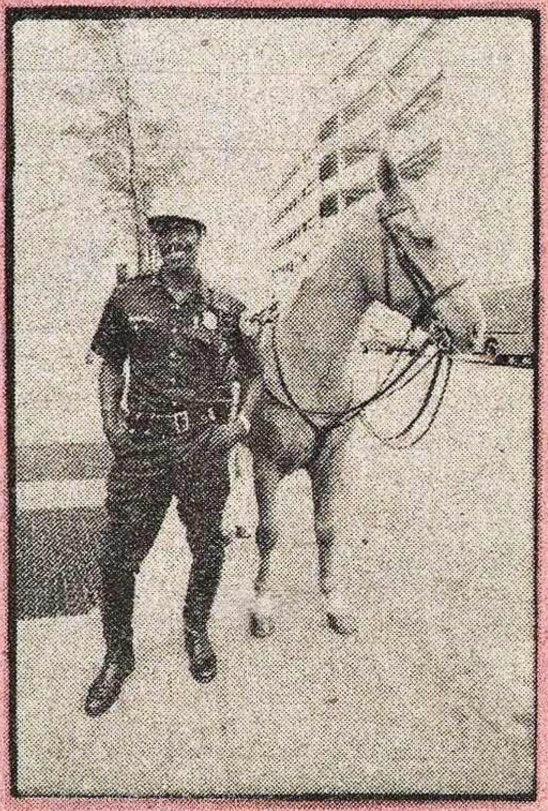
Details from little bits of a story. The Clash story, like all the very best stories, doesn't start once upon a time, but is about limitation and potential, a search, and will not have a happy ending. It's thick with plot, the characters are complex and wonderful, and it's impossible to ignore.

It started something like this:

DETAILS: THE HISTORY

"Twenty one was when I first got sensible, when I learnt to play the guitar. Before that I was just poncing about," Joe Strummer tells me.

From school I went straight into art college, and after a year I just went off and did absolutely nothing. For at least two years I



was just bumming around. Everyone's gotta bum around. I worked on a farm but stayed round London most of the time, and then when I was 21 I thought right I'll get really serious now and I'll learn to play the guitar.

"When I was sixteen like everyone I had a Spanish flamenco guitar and I learnt to play some blues toons on it, then I thought well I can't handle any more of that so I never bothered. When I was 20 I felt sick that I'd never bothered, I thought 'Shit, I could be better than Eric Clapton,so now I'm 21 I'm really gonna do it. If I don't do it next year I'm going to be even more pissed off'.

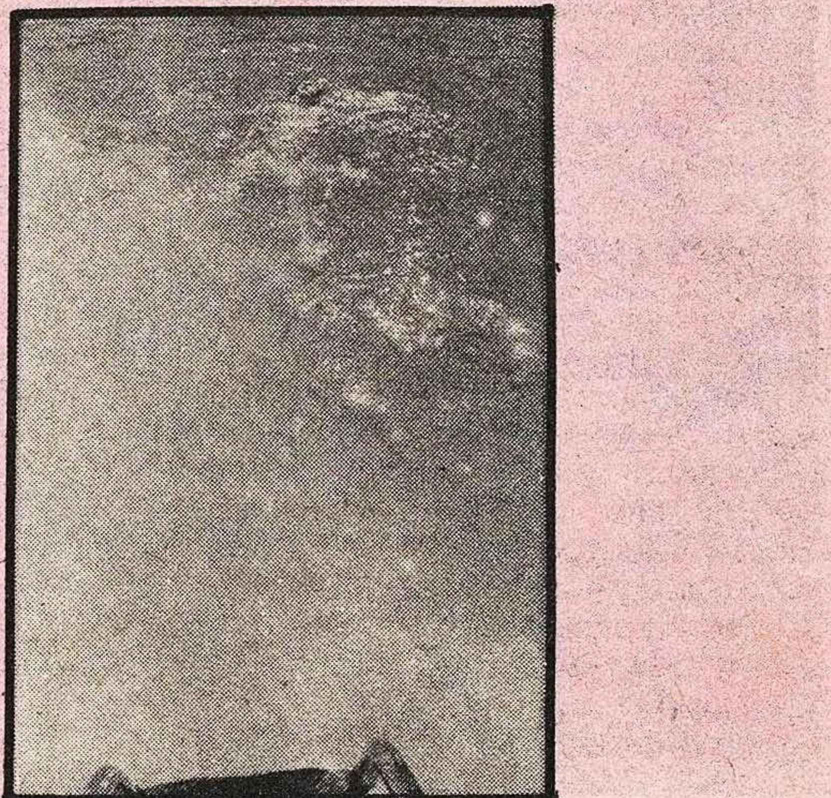
"So I just started, and having to earn my living with it helped. I ended up bottling for this busker, and it was like, I found out later on, the apprenticeship of a blues musician. I got a real kick out of that. All the great blues players started out collecting the money for some master, to learn the licks. The guy I bottled for would play the violin and eventually whenever there was a guitar lying around from another busker I would borrow it and he would teach me how to accompany. Just simple country and western and Chuck Berry.

"One day he said he was going off to do the pitch at Oxford Circus and he left me at Green Park and said' 'Now you do this pitch.' I had a ukelele. He just walked off and left me alone. It was rush hour and the train emptied at one end of the corridor. One second the corridor was like empty, the next minute it was packed with people streaming through. It was like now or never, playing to this full house. That was the first time I remember performing on my own.

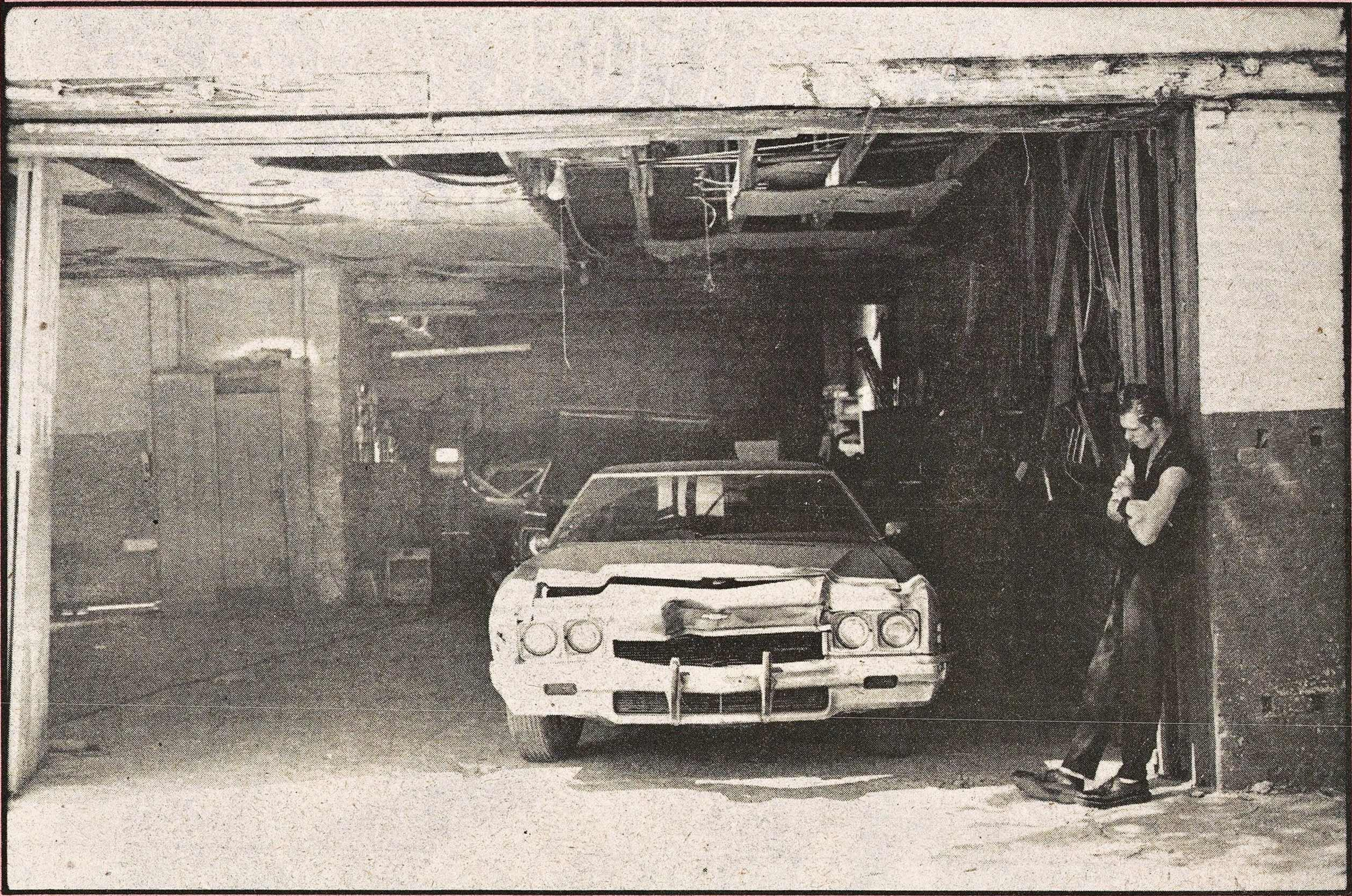
"I got good money but I had to give it up. I was walking along a curved passage at Oxford Circus and I happened to glance up at the ceiling at these speakers and I couldn't work out what they were, and I started playing and a voice said, from the box, speaking to me all on my own in this corridor, one flight under the city, this box was saying 'Right you clear off we're sending the railway police'. I realised these speakers were linked to the cop shop upstairs, where I was used to being dragged, but usually you had a chance to run off. But this was like — what can you do? This is 1984. This guy walked past and I screamed at him 'Can you hear that? This is 1984!' and he gave me a funny look and rushed off. I thought 'Aah fuck it' and packed it in.

"Then I was hanging around the Elgin Avenue, the Elephant And Castle pub there, and I was watching this Irish trio hacking out this stuff and I thought, 'Hey this is how to get over the summer', y'know, when my form of income was like curtailed because of the speaker system, I thought this is how to do it. All these people were hanging round my squat just doing nothing and I thought I'll whip up a few of these guys and we'll play in some Irish pubs. I can do that. And that's how the 101'ers started, just to get over the summer. I never thought we'd end up playing in the Windsor Castle, which seemed to me to be the be all and end all, never mind Madison Square Garden, that's what it seemed like to me.

"After busking for a while doing Chuck



"This guy walked past and I screamed at him 'Can you hear that? This is 1984!' and he gave me a funny look and rushed off."

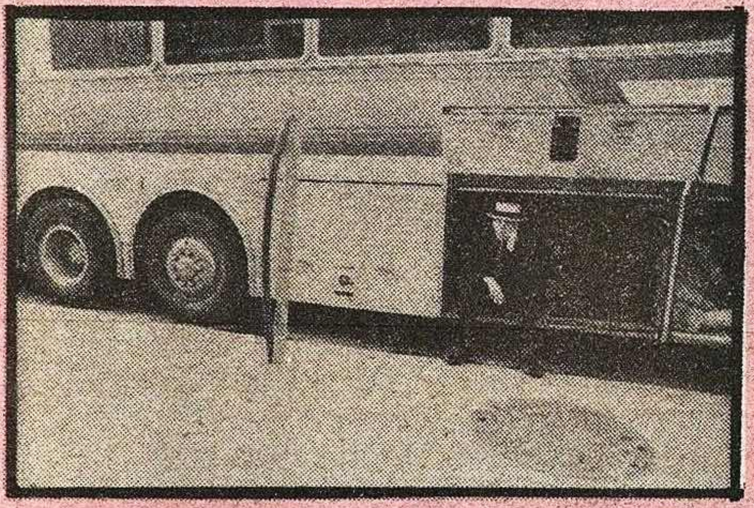


Berry and blues tunes you start to switch around the chords when no one's looking. You start making up things in those endless hours when no one's around. That's how I guess I started. I didn't really want to write songs cos I figured that I couldn't . . . I'd never been musical, I didn't know what I was getting into. I'd always been into the music ever since 'Not Fade Away', I'd always been a total number one fan, but I never thought that I could do it, expecially as I'd always been more into painting. I just ended up writing after trying everything else, by default.

"The 101'ers' gigs were really chaotic, like hiring a room above a pub, tenpence to get in — independent promotion I just realised that was. This girl said rent the room for a quid — A QUID — and we can put on a club, and we can print circulars, and we were lying around going 'Leave it out, we'll never do that, no one'll ever turn up'. She pushed us into it and we had a thriving club going before we knew where we were. Every Wednesday night, packed with lunatics.

"It just seemed by default again, doing 'Boney Maroney' to a load of lunatics, and we only had six numbers so to fill it out I figured I was going to have to write something. I think the first thing I wrote was 'Keys To Your Heart'.

"It took a long time for me to meet up with Mick. I mean, from that time to the time I met Mick is almost the longest period of my life. It was six gigs a week for maybe eighteen months. Getting work was all by default as well. We got on to the pub circuit and we started getting one line mentions in the papers. After that started it was just a slog. It just seemed after doing eighteen months of that we were just invisible. I started to lose my mind, I would go around the squat saying, 'We're invisible, we should change our name to The Invisibles'. Cos I felt like we'd been doing great shows for three hundred people in Norwich or Thetford and it would just be invisible. You'd get back to London about 5 in the morning, unload the gear in the back



room, put on a kettle and go 'What the fuck's all that about?' And in the paper it'd be like Queen and all that. We were just shambling from one gig to the next banging our heads against the wall.

"As soon as Johnny Rotten hit the stand, right, the writing was on the wall. As far as I was concerned. I was in that state of mind that I was just slogging around getting nowhere. I sacked yet another guitarist because although he was a brilliant technician he didn't understand what I wanted. I got Martin Stone in to play some shows and that was fun but it just seemed that whole thing was over.

"Bernie Rhodes turned up at the Golden Lion with Keith Levine and I went outside and stood at the bustop with them and he sort of said, 'What you gonna do?' And I said, 'I dunno,' and he said, 'Well come down to this squat in Sheperds Bush and meet these guys,' and Keith was sat there nodding saying, 'You'd better'.

"I met Mick the next day. I didn't even have no choice. The 101'ers were strictly a well known west London R&B band.

"When I met Mick and Keith at the squat we went in and sat on the bed and looked at each other and like Bernie said, 'This is the guy you gotta write songs with,' and Mick sort of scowled and I thought, 'Well I haven't got any choice. This is what I've got to do'.

"Finally we got playing and we'd play anything until we could think of something to write. Me and Mick were just sitting upstairs and I had a big notebook and I would just write the words out with a big crayon and he would bang out a simple tune. I don't know how it happened. I got no memory, really, no recall at all. I can remember writing 'White Riot' and '1977' but the rest I can't remember.

"The whole thing was really great from the beginning of 1976 when my group crumbled and I met this lot and we took off, all the way through that. My dreams were like carnivals, my mind would churn over and over in my sleep and I'd wake up and I'd been speeding naturally cos of the decisions, throwing in one thing and doing another, everything was being tried and experimented, it was just great.

"It can't seem to be like that all the time but it's great when it is.

"We knew it was going to be good. You know that certainty when you don't even bother to think, that certainty was with us and I'm glad of it. We knew that this was it. I don't know how or why.

"I loved the exposure that I got. Finally. I thought 'We'll show those bastards'. They'd been ignoring us, and when we got big reviews I just thought it was really something. It seemed like we deserved it.

"To be honest I'm a total idiot in the business affairs, more so then, I'm really dumb and naive now, and I'd freely admit that I didn't know what the fuck was going on, I hadn't got a fucking clue. Maybe it was because we were being so totally creative, like business decisions seemed totally irrelevant. It's like jazz musicians saying 'Let me play the horn, don't bother me with details'. I was only happy that we were going to be able to put our stuff on record. When Bernie said we were going to sign to Polydor I just left it all to him and I just thought 'Fucking great, we can put out a record'.

"Signing for CBS was a good idea for us at the time because it was really a danger of it being us and The Pistols, we signed to major labels, The Damned went to Stiff, and then like we went in the Rainbow as well as that and the Pistols went off on the Anarchy tour with us bottom of the bill and like that was a conscious attempt on the part of McLaren and Rhodes to burst out of the confined thing. They'd been to New York and what they hated was that the punk thing was like CBGB's on the Bowery was how it stayed for five years. It never came out of there.

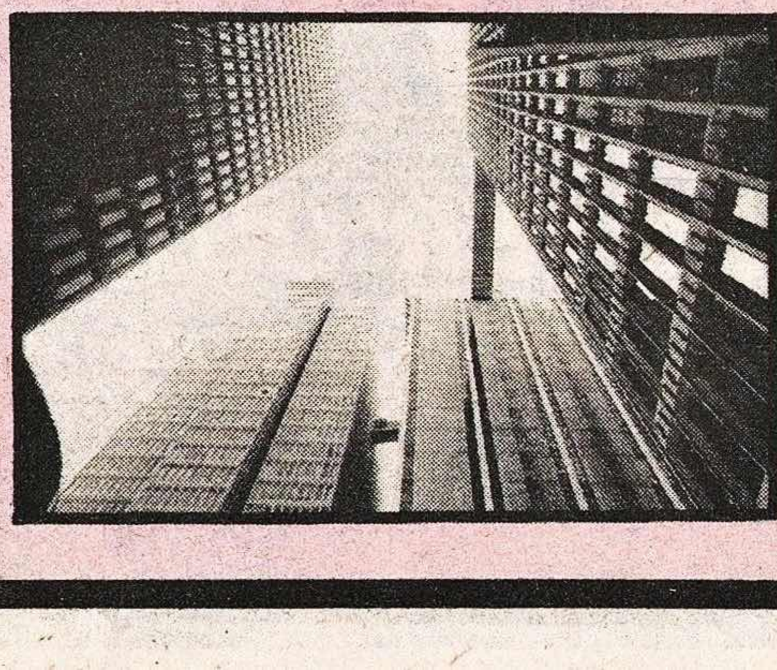
"And McLaren and Rhodes were right; our stuff and the Pistols' stuff was great. I don't want to blag, but it was great, and it didn't deserve to stay in a hole in Covent Garden for five years. Can you imagine us playing The Roxy Covent Garden for four years? I'm glad that McLaren and Rhodes had the suss to suss *that*, and that was like part of breaking out. We burst out when it needed to be taken seriously, y'know what I mean.

"Now people go 'Of course it was taken seriously', but in those days it was a novelty: 'Ha ha ha look at those idiots, pass me the Little Feat album'. And at least we fucking burst out. We had to."

DETAILS: THE TV SHOW

Two and a half years after bursting out, gaunt, twitchy Joe Strummer is sitting in a row with his equally restless comrades, blinking in front of the unblinking glare of a white heat television light.

Perhaps that early Joe Strummer was looking for a reward. So is this it? It's part of it. Sitting in a room the size of a bathroom tucked



away in the corner of the New York Palladium, squashed between Mick Jones and Topper Headon, preparing to play spokesman for a movement to the film camera of a well known American documentary programme, *20/20* which wants to know what this noise is all

about. Thirty minutes after concluding a performance that cracked his voice, blistered his hands and blurred his eyes, Strummer is expected to explain. And perhaps he'd better get it right. Millions will look on. Joe can't see it like that. He needs a drink.

Two and a half years, two albums of songs, a handful of singles, lots of questions and lots of answers, and Joe Strummer and The Clash's reward is to have people continually poking away.

What's going on?
What's this? . . . and that?
Why do you look like that?
Where's the change?

Whatever it is, revolution or idle chit chat, it has to be televised. And because of the defaults and the anger it had to be The Clash. It was inevitable looking back. The Clash have become known. Unique. Important. And still a novelty. They don't flinch. They get on with it.

That a programme like *20/20* comes to The Clash for comment — and hopefully a small helping of controversy — is both a sign of success, and also, because of the nature of the programme, a sign of failure. Clash are viewed as little more than hopeless eccentrics. To burst out in America isn't easy. The Clash don't shy away; they get on with it.

Kozmo Vinyl manages to get the group in one place at the same time and squeeze them into the room. The tv people smile genially and hopefully. The room has been set up so that the final on screen viewing will be the typical stark, crude punk setting. Clash fidget and sigh as the technicians fix microphones and camera. They're to play sensible spokesmen for British punk rock but they're tired, they want to go home. Duty, the vague sense that this is the reward, keeps them in place.

Quiet Paul Simonon, with the awkward frame and beautiful face, contributes a couple of works to the conversation, fights to keep a playful smirk off his hard features, and then walks out, letting the smirk break up his face. That'll look good on tv.

Topper Headon, sneaky and cheeky, small and tough, absent mindedly lets Strummer draw a moustache on his slight face and then he departs too.

Grinning condemning Mick Jones and a tetchy Strummer do the talking, warming just a little to their subject. How could they not? Off camera, the careful female voice prods, nudges and doesn't help the discontented duo into action.

... 20/20 take six ... I have to ask you some pretty dumb and stupid and obvious questions because a lot of people don't know anything about you or punk.

Micky plays the good boy, teeth break through his lips. "Well, we are The Clash," he explains as if to a little child," and we are a British punk band from London."

"Australia," grunts Strummer, looking away.

What is punk anyway?

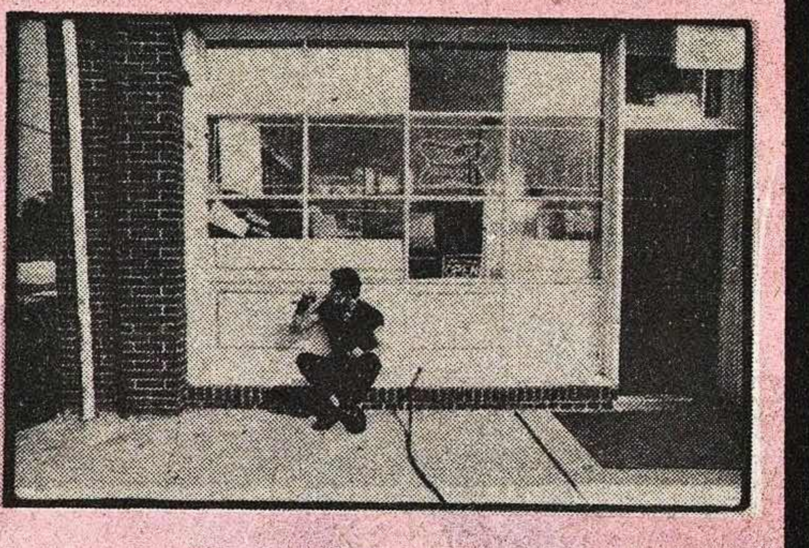
"It's a music innit?" charms Jones.

Is there such a thing as American punk music?

"Not really," decides Jones, taking the question at safety pin literal.

"What about the Dead Kennedy's?" asks Joe.

"Mmm. But really it started in London in the



mid '70s and we are the *only* survivors!" Jones eyes sparkle.

What do the people who play punk have in common?

Simonon says his two words worth. "Short hair."

"Yeah," agrees Jones" and no flairs."

Everyone says you're angry. What are you angry about?

"Fucking everything," spits Jones convincingly.

"The hotels ain't good enough," croaks Strummer.

"Well we're quite happy actually," claims Headon.

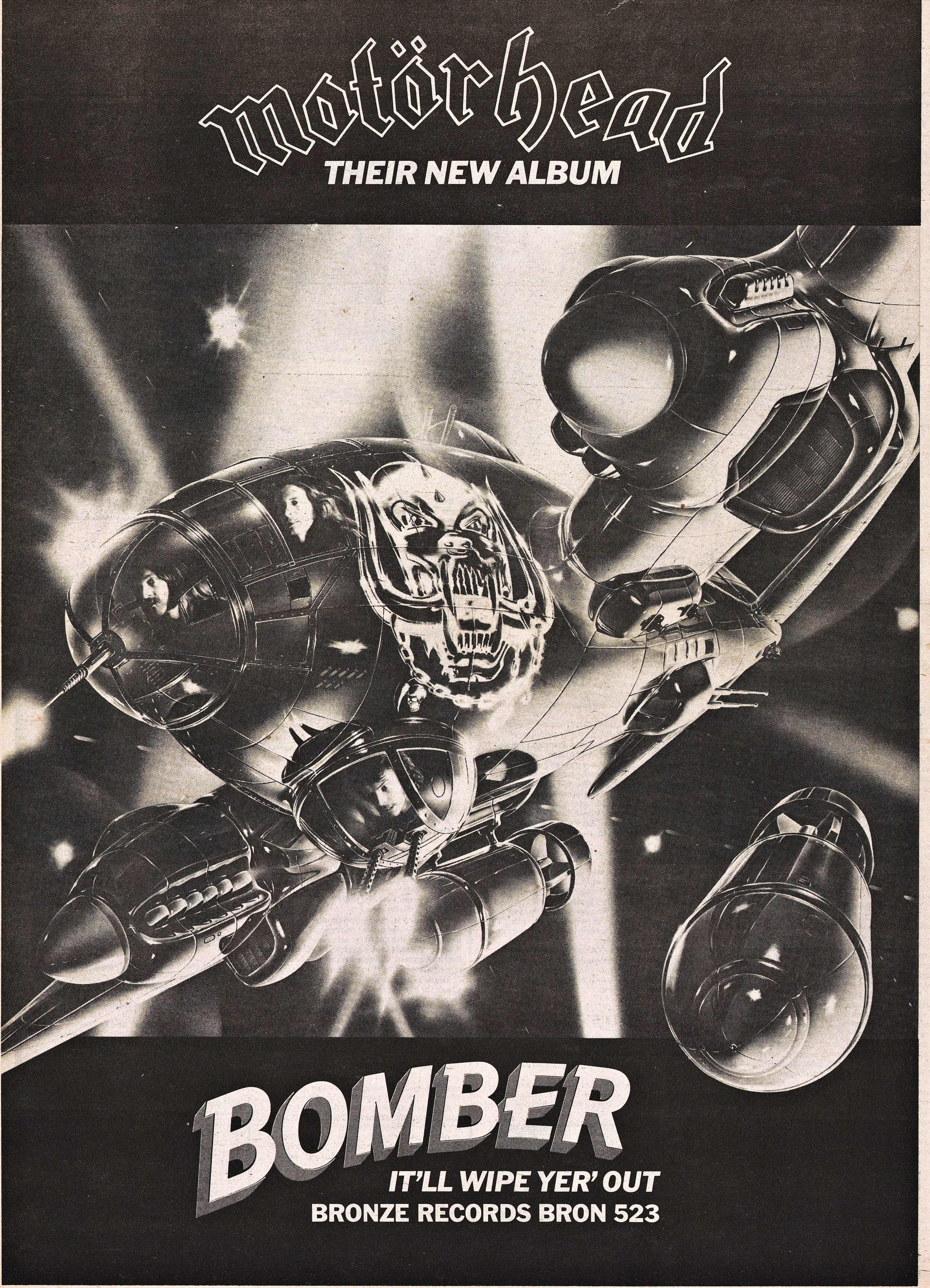
Are you a political band?

Headon, Strummer and Jones break into a silly sing song. "We're A Political Band. La La La La." Jones decided they should write that one down.

The careful female voice continues, unmoved: *What's the difference between your music and American?*

"Well this is English music. What happened to American music is completely opposite to what happened to English music. The English music is really exciting it's in the spirit of rock'n'roll; that's what we're doing, we're trying to remind people of that ..." Jones

Continues page 42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Tue	27	„	HAMMERSMITH Odeon
Wed	28	„	SOUTHAMPTON Gaumont
Fri	30	„	BLACKBURN King Georges Hall
Sat	1	December	LEEDS University
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Tue	4	„	DUNSTABLE Queensway Hall
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Fri	7	„	IPSWICH Gaumont
Sun	9	„	BOURNEMOUTH Winter Gardens
Tue	11	„	CARDIFF Sophia Gardens
Wed	12	„	BIRMINGHAM Odeon
Thu	13	„	CHELMSFORD Odeon
Fri	14	„	CAMBRIDGE Corn Exchange

From page 39

pauses. Strummer screams and clears his throat: "IT AIN'T ABOUT PLAYING THE RIGHT FUCKING CHORD FOR A START!"

What is it about?

"I can't quite put my finger on it," Strummer sneers.

How do you feel about people buying your album? The commercial success?

Strummer: "Well, there's about three people who've bought our album so far."

Jones: "I'd rather they bought ours than somebody else's."

Strummer: "We've sold three records and after this tour we'll sell another three."

What are you trying to do? You're on a tour of American and lots of people are seeing you, far more than three.

Strummer: "If we come to an American city there are approximately 2,400 people who come to see us, who know about us. On the other hand there are ten million zillion people who've never even heard of us in the city, especially those people who go to high school or low school or any other kind of school. I've been in their bedrooms in Virginia or Texas and I've seen their albums stacked up by the bed, and there's Kansas, Boston, Foreigner and I try to say to them, 'These records ain't no good, doncha know about The Yardbirds?' And they say 'Who?' And I say 'Doncha know about The Clash?' And they say 'Who?' And that's it. How are we going to get through to these people? They ain't rushing over to the radio station saying 'Put on a Clash record PUT ON A CLASH RECORD!' They ain't doing that."

Jones: "A lot of the radio stations in America aren't even playing black music ..."

Strummer: "Which is even worse! Never mind The Clash, what about where the music came from!"

Jones: "You're sitting in Minneapolis and you don't even know what reggae music is!"

Strummer: "For every satin-suited platform-soled macho-strutting guitarist, for everyone of those up there in the lights sniffing coke, right, there's like 50 or 60 blackmen starving in the same town who invented the music with their own sweat, and this guy is ripping it off and posing away. It's shit!"

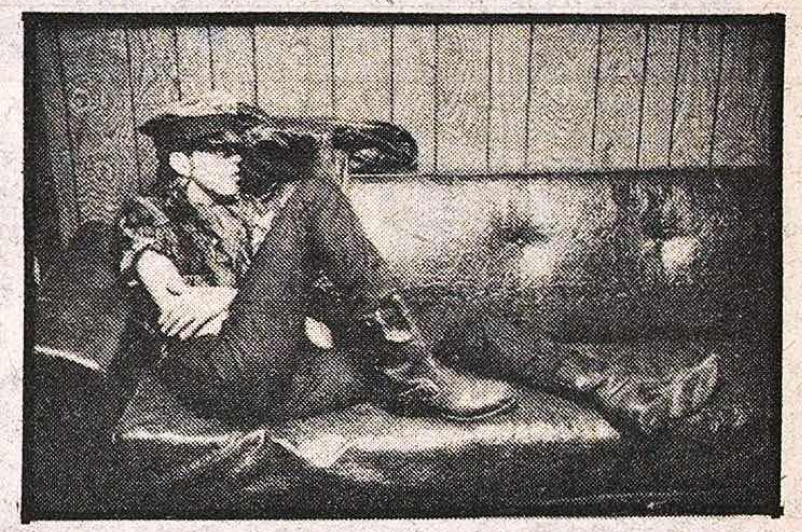
Jones and Strummer had by now successfully succeeded in pulling the conversation away from the confines it looked like it was keeping to. The conversation jumps through discos and theatres and things, Strummer and Jones really wanting to go but keep getting worked up by the questions. They have to answer. Who else will point these things out? Eventually the careful female voice asks for some final words of wisdom.

Jones: "Keep on complaining." Strummer scrawls TRUE on the wall behind Jones' head as he speaks. "If you want to give us a hand you've really got to do it ... if you want to hear things on the radio you got to ring up the radio station ..."

Strummer: "In Detroit they've got a free radio organisation ... free radio for the '80s, they ain't being passive ... I'd just like to say don't be passive .."

Jones: "Don't be apathetic."

Strummer: "And we highly recommed that



you go to a show and if you don't like the show you've got to bottle them off stage, you gotta make your feelings felt. That way everybody knows what you want. If you don't tell anybody how they gonna know?"

OK. One more question can I ask: You're signed to CBS, and Columbia and all that stuff, are they trying to put any pressure on you?

Jones: "They try."

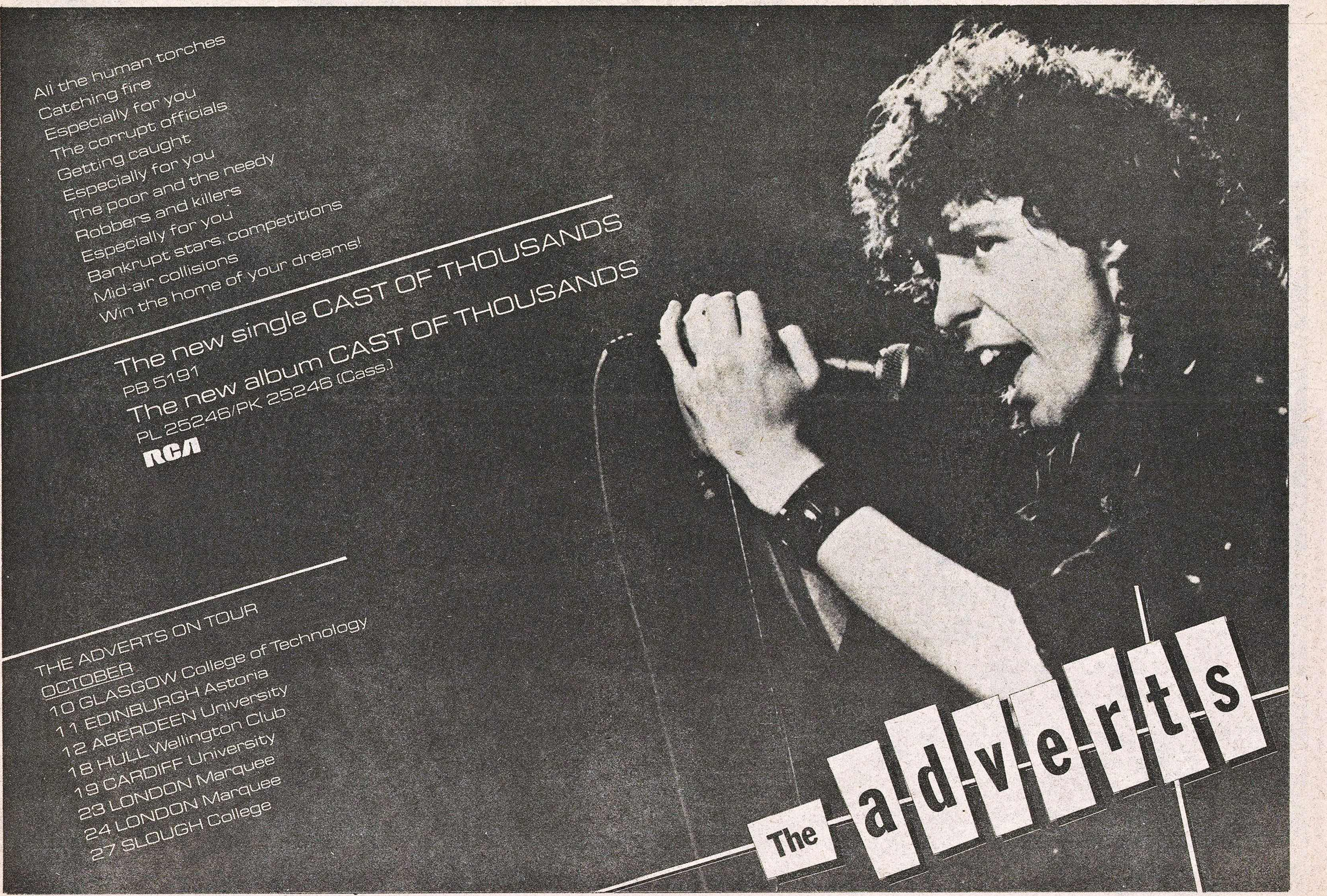
Strummer: "We've been on Epic, we've been an artiste on Epic Records for two and a half years and for the first two and a half years they didn't even know we were on the label, and then they found out out and they come and shake our hands but they never make with the chequebook baby. We want some cheques, otherwise how we gonna get petrol in the bus to get down to Kansas?"

Jones: "So come on. Hey this is on ABC not CBS!"

Strummer: "CBS never come crawling..."

DETAILS: THE FANS

Don't ask me to be your hero
I will only let you down
Don't ever sleep with your hero
Things will never be the same
All the heros, like they say



They're all dead out of the way
If you see me on the street
Don't attempt to speak to me, cos
If you see me on the street
I won't want to know you
— Patrik Fitzgerald. Copyright Control

Mick Jones likes the Patrik Fitzgerald song 'Your Hero.' He says that Fitzgerald has got it exactly right, which is odd because Fitzgerald must never have experienced, perhaps only anticipated, what Jones has to go through ... as a new hero.

Even in America, walking down the street, visiting clubs, in the dressing room, teenagers and people in their twenties clamour around Jones, clutch his hand, offer bits of paper for autographs, attempt conversation ... Jones always seems a little unsure ...

"I find the laying of hands a very strange thing. No one's come along and wanted to shake my hand in order to heal me, but they often look to be healed ..."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," agrees Strummer, "they want to shake your hand, but they want to take something, I don't know what ..."

"They never offer anything, or very few do," continues Jones. Even so, Jones often looks for something.

After *20/20* have used The Clash, Jones and Strummer move back to the nearby dressing room, overflowing with New Yorkers. The previous night's New York performance had seen a post gig dressing room filled with slick liggers and empty smilers. For the second night, Jones wanted the fans to be let in.

The fans are let in. Stern but not impassive schoolteacher Kozmo Vinyl organises them in batches. Jones never really knows how to handle them, but he wants the experience.

Jones back in the dressing room, fans move in for the kill. Jones, is, unusually, frowning. He's not pleased with the tv performance. He's not as comfortable as the others with Clash's tendency to lark about. "I think we were a bit like Morecambe and Wise," he mutters, "it's like a comedy. It wasn't right, what we're talking about isn't comedy, it's tragedy, the story is a tragedy. Still by the time they've fucking finished with it ..."

All the time Jones is talking to me in the crush of the dressing room he's obliged to sign autographs and put on a brave face through his fretting. "I can refuse, but I feel that I need to explain why I am refusing. In the streets I refuse; it feels like a mutually humiliating experience. This is why now I'm talking to you I'm signing, it takes time to explain to everybody that it's not worth it. In a situation like this it's better to keep signing. I just hope it doesn't do too much harm."

Doesn't he see it as a sign he's achieving something I ask, as another autograph has to be signed?

"Not at all. If all we've achieved is someone wanting my autograph then I think we've gone wrong."

Jones seems in an emotional mood, a little pensive, so it is a good time to ask him what he wants to achieve. He looks into the distance, oblivious for the moment to the congratulatory hubble and cry of New York's finest all round him and the people close to looking for a look. The grin has gone.

"What do I want to acheive ... I want things to be different here ... I want things to be different in England ... I want stupid things like people happy ... and real music ... and an end to all the shit ... I just feel to be able to contribute, that's an acheivement in itself. Change? Little things do change but it takes a bloody lot longer than people think. In a way that's what I mean when I say there's too many smiles, because although I enjoy the playing I don't want people to think I'm all 'Ha ha ha how you doing let's boogie!' y'know, cos that's no challenge for the audience, that's exactly what they're expecting, and then they get what they expect. Well I hope that we're gonna be something that they don't expect."

He emphasises the *don't.* People around are beginning to listen. I ask him about The Clash clowning.

"I think there's too much. I do want people to have a great time and enjoy themselves, and I think that's what it's all about really, as far as the concert is concerned right, but somehow I don't feel good unless I feel that they've gone away and thought about it or something ... the after effect, the after taste is what I'm really after."

A small bearded person nearby has been listening. He speaks: "I think everybody buys your record after the show and they get the text."

Jones isn't satisfied. "I don't want everybody to buy the record just because that's what you do after you've seen a group, although I do want people to have the records, but that like ain't the be all and end all of it, it's like only the start when you've got the records. That's where it starts. You've got to hear it and really listen and then maybe there'll be a change. Maybe that's just my imagination ..." Jones is often very self depracating about his passion.

"Maybe there won't be a change. How does it affect you?" he asks the small bearded person.

The small bearded person comes on like a university lecturer. "I can say that in Belgium there's a lot of people listening to these records and discussing about it, they're saying this, they're saying that, anti-capitilistic things, discussing starts it and then it goes further and further and it starts to change your life, things other than things like money are important, saying everything's beautiful and I love you ... things to change."

Jones pulls a face: "Sounds like George Harrison to me."

"No," retorts the small bearded person, "I'm not an optimist."

"No, I agree with most of the things you say," says Jones, "We're living in the material world! Good old George! I'm going to join a monastry, Paul."

He's alright, I say. He has financed *Life Of Brian.*

Jones' grin twitches. "George Harrison is a good bloke after all! Hey look!" he lunges away and grabs a boy a couple of yards that he'd been talking to before. "Tell this guy what you were saying before about Bored With The USA and New York"

The boy drawls at me, with as much a garble as possible with such a slow accent. "They were bored with the USA until they came over here and realised that the fans loved them, realised that The Clash are the ones so we figured that you weren't bored with us no more and you wanted to come here, and then you play the song and show that you still are. You've got to keep coming!"

Jones is pleased that he is having a conversation with a fan that seems quite constructive. He's getting information. He continues reliving the previous conversation they'd had. "What about if we started to sound a bit strange to you, playing all acoustic numbers or something, what would you think of that?"

"That's ok."

"What about jazz?"

"Hang on, you said two things, before you just said acoustic ... acoustic work I like — 'Groovy Times', that is really special maaan ..."

"If we played jazz ..."

"Naaah ... I think we'd fade away a little."

"But they love us now," Jones smiles. The future takes care of itself.

"Aaaw I really love you now," the fan is a fan again. "It's not like The Ramones, they keep playing the same sound!"

"And we are always different!" triumphs Jones. The grin returns. For now at least.

Next Week: More Details — The Show: Before During and After; The Interview, The Radio Show, The Experiencing, The Tedium And Where Will It End? — "You've got to think of it in terms of fifteen rounds. One or two people are finishing the fifteen. We've just finished the first round, but we had a big introduction."

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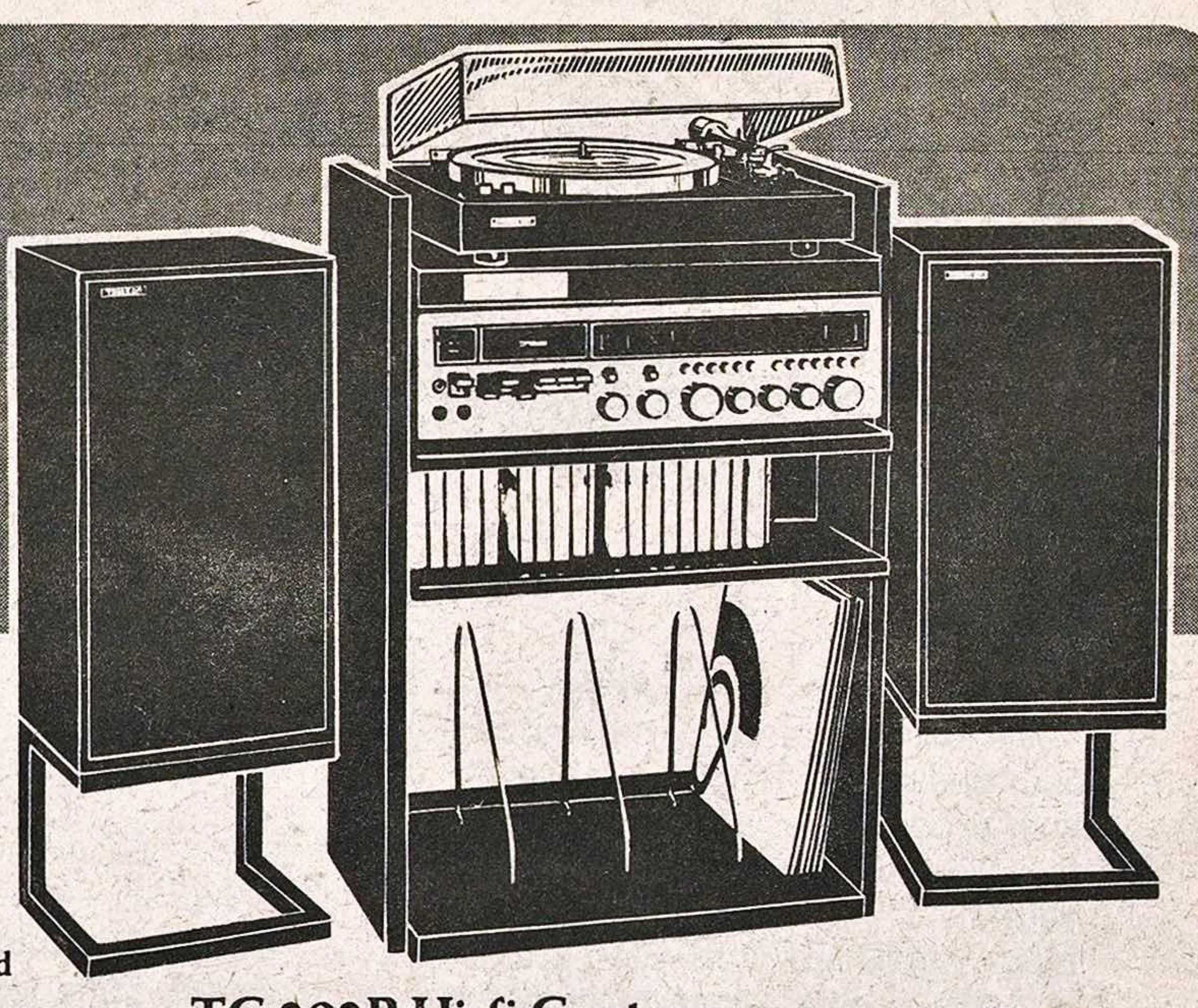

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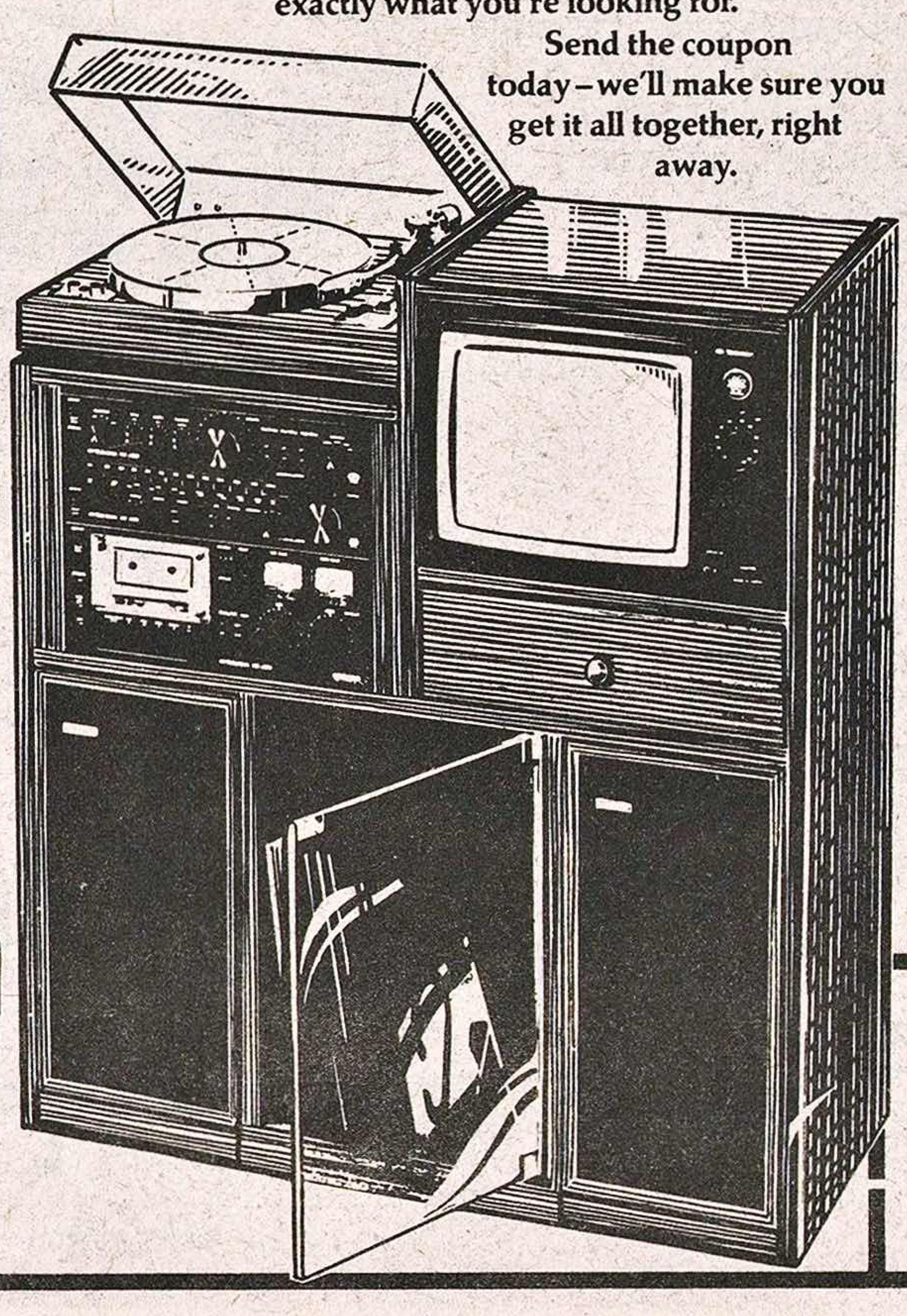

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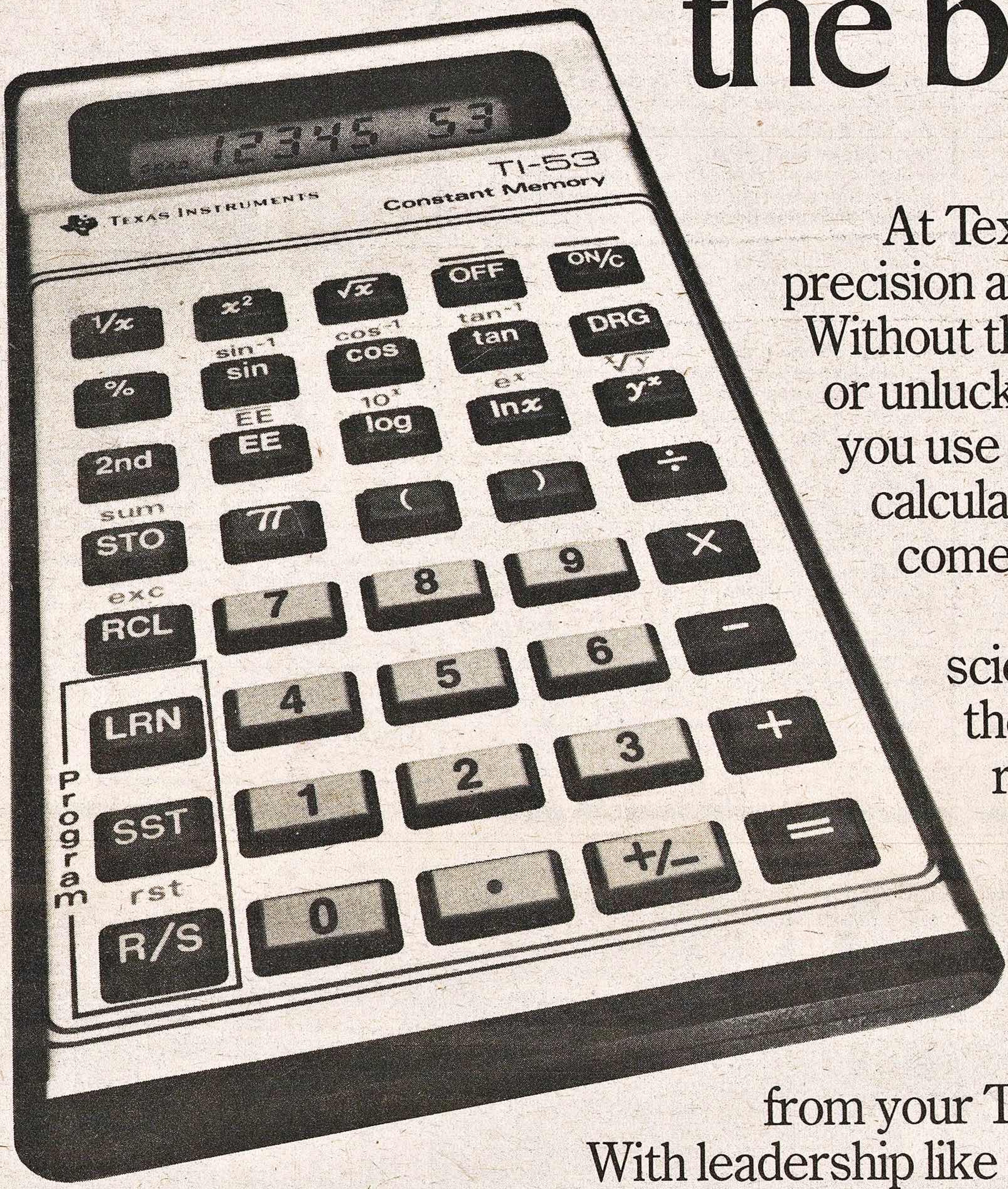

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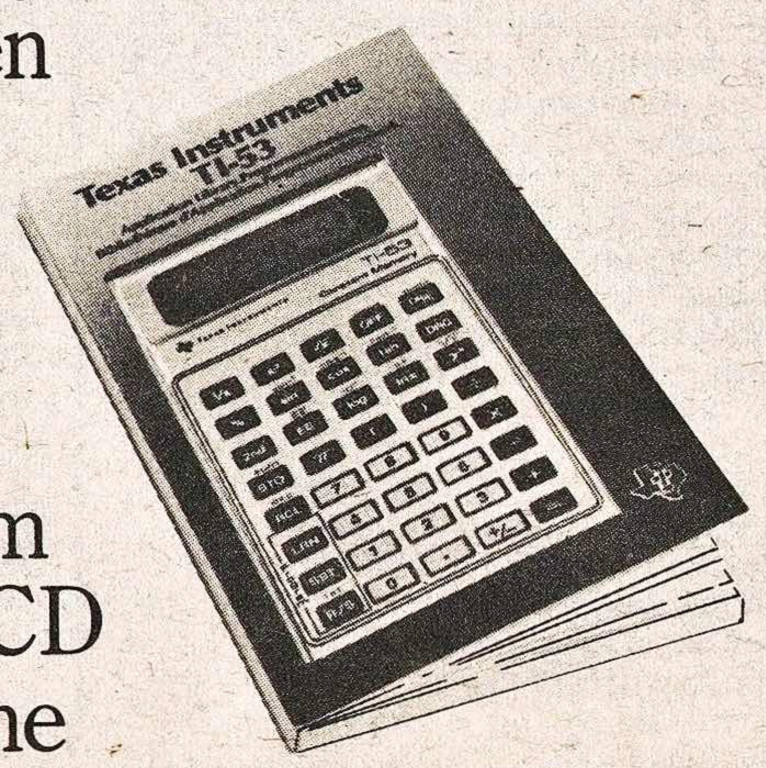

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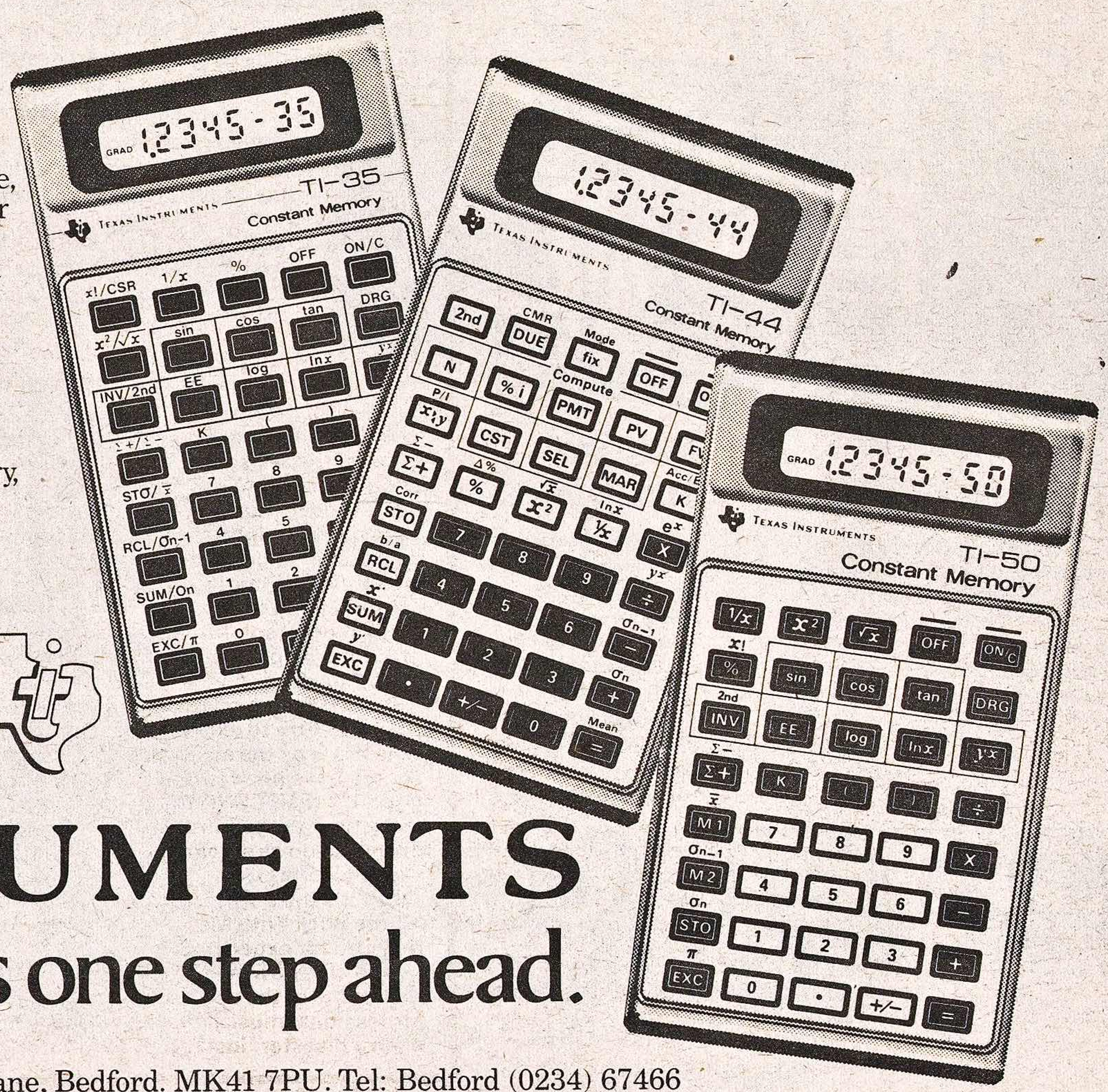

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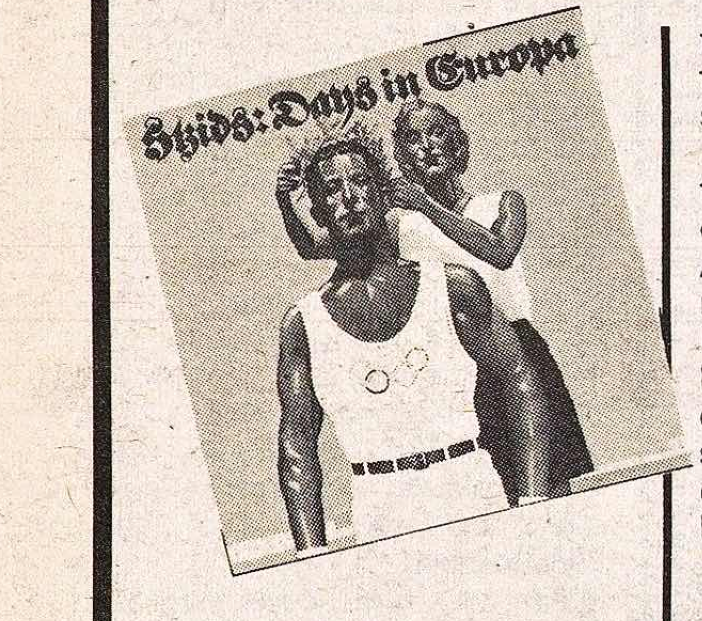


THE SKIDS
Days In Europa *(Virgin)*

IT'S like a Catch 22, this Skids packaging. Disorientating artwork is conjured up to match Richard Jobson's oblique lyrics, Sartre quotes to highlight their fathomless depth, and gatefold sleeve depicting Celtic skirmishes to bolster their music's sturdy, martial undertow.

Accordingly, the band now seem hell-bent on out-stripping their own marketing, and in so doing, career even further away from their original blue-print as four spirited, brusque, slightly pretentious, post-punk, danceband rockers. If their debut 'Scared To Dance' found Jobson dipping a toe in his thematic pool, its successor proves that he's flung basics to the wind and plunged straight in the deep end. The only trouble is, he can't swim.

'Days In Europa' (dedicated, I might add, "to the ghosts of futility") is a powerful, intense, confusing and ultimately unsatisfying venture. What may once have been interpreted as a kindred rebel spirit is replaced by rich-sounding, evocative but indigestible scenarios, paradoxically delivered with sufficient vitriol to suit their old brand of brash, brooding rock anthems with soccer mob overtones.

Personnel changes also contribute to this consolidation of direction. With Tom Kellichan departed, Rich Kid Rusty Egan deputises with bass-heavy, strictly economic drumming, and Bill Nelson (who was behind the desk for 'Masquerade') adds characteristically meccanik keyboards, and produces to heights of grandeur suggested by the ornate wordage and the cover's 'gothic' typeface.

The production's mostly very effective, apart from showing little sympathy to Jobson's vocals, leaving him drowning between walls of sound when — being one of the least colourful singers on the circuit — he needs all the sharp focus he can get.

He suffers worst on the title track, a virtually unintelligible ode along the lines of Apocalyptic Judgement meets The Olympic Games. Musically it's The Skids' hallmark — thickpile rhythm chords, distant treble synthesizer, spacious bedrock drums, relentless chant vocal line — and it's intrusive through its sheer predictability. As the bulk of the album sticks very close to this pattern, frequently slowing down to a dirge-like pace, the band start to sound formularised.

You'll be hard pushed to find anything remotely provocative, let alone a potential chart single. 'Animation', 'Pros And Cons', 'The Olympian' and 'Thanatos' are all standard fare, setting Jobson's lavish but blurred pictures against Stuart Adamson's dense, repetitive backing. 'Charade' is only salvaged by an intriguing instrumental built on escalating banks of reverberating guitar/synth figures.

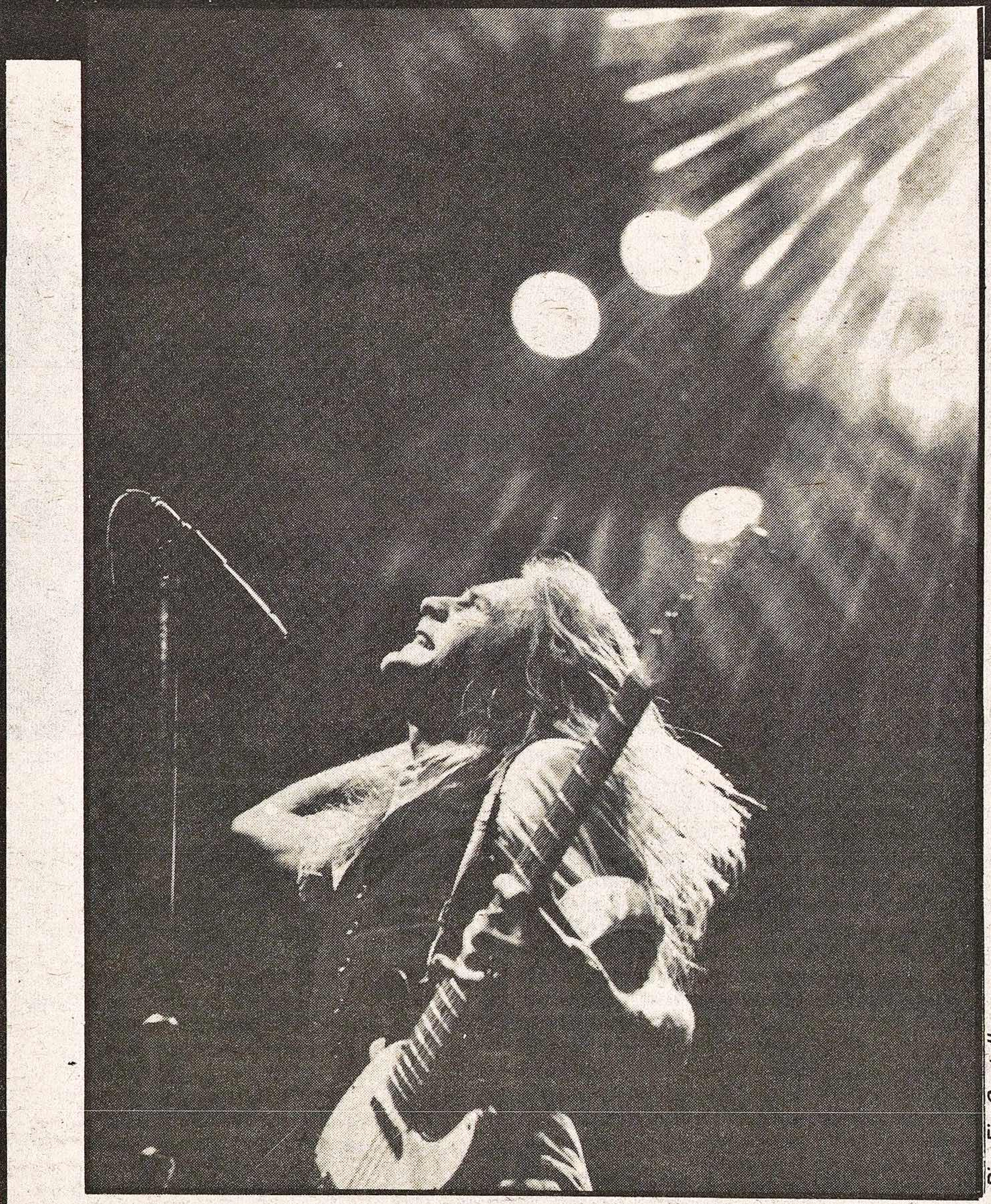
Of course their most obsessive theme — the soldier/saint/martyr syndrome — returns with a vengeance. The absurdly titled 'Dulce Et Decorum Est (Pro Patria Mori)' is based on a powerfully truncated rhythm and waves a Georgian (and presumably National) banner, cutting its sonorous Latin quote with the revealing line *"My childlike dream is marching west."* Such patriotic fervour is transferred Stateside with suspicious ease in 'Working For The Yankee Dollar', a recollection of war in Vietnam and Germany. Are his sympathies really this widespread? And if so, why? And if not, what's it all about anyway? Search me.

'Peaceful Times' concludes the album on an appropriately obscure and disarming note. If you tape it and run it in reverse, as did your fact-hungry guide, you'll soon discover that it's the opening track 'Animation' played backwards and overlayed with yet more incomprehensible lyrics delivered by Jobson in doom-laden voice-over.

This either means it's a 'concept' disc, or that they've sussed a subtle ruse for padding out their awesome eight-album deal. As the sleeve notes bear testimony: "Two down six to go". Wish 'em luck — they'll need it.

Mark Ellen

A boxed set of Skids (L-R): Stuart Adamson, Bill Simpson, Richard Jobson. Collect six NME logos and win Rusty Egan.



Pic: Fin Costello

"I feel a concept album coming on"

STATUS QUO
Whatever You Want *(Vertigo)*

"On again/No I never knew we could go on and on/They never thought we would be rockin' on/No we never thought we — could be rockin' on. . ."

FOR the last five years Status Quo have toasted each of their birthdays with the kind of desperate cheerfulness shown by people who are convinced they're suffering from a terminal disease and unlikely to see out another year. Invariably they've contrived some publicity party and its very reason for being was as much of a surprise to the band as it was to a rock audience conditioned to believe in the transience of rock 'n' roll.

Now Quo are 17 and the celebrations are different.

A feeble psychedelic guitar flutters through the speakers. It intensifies and then gives way to a darkly measured guitar rhythm, flashes of bare steel torn over it. Another guitar picks up the same relentless rhythm. And then another. Just as it swells up, in come the bass and drums with digs to the stomach, solid and sound. The pressure grows and grows, becoming irresistibly loud. *Thwack!* The snare rings out and there's a brief, dramatic pause. . .

"WHATEVER YOU WANT!"

Of course that's already a massive hit single and a true Quo classic — a piledriver of power, uncontrived simplicity and relentless excitement. And apart from two tracks — 'Living On An Island' and 'Come Rock With Me' — they are the qualities which overrun this LP. For any other band to capture this same, well, 'magic', on anything after their third album would be a major achievement.

This is Quo's thirteenth.

Musically, it is their most successful ever, with a positive enthusiasm surging through eight of the ten songs; guitar rhythms shoulder-barging and swaggering against the steady, solid pump of bass and drums. The vocals are straightforward, presenting a succession of pop melodies, invariably with effective little hooks. And with all this chugging and churning on, the short, clumsy instrumental solos (usually demented attempts on guitar) are quickly shattered and left in the dust.

It's instinctive music, and a triumph when they don't try to exceeed that spontaneity; which is why the acoustic track 'Island' should have been left on the cutting-room floor. It's their CSN&Y impersonation, a testament to their musical skills and about as likely of Quo as smoking Dunhill and getting their hair cropped.

But it's the only major flaw, along with 'Come Rock With Me' — some dodgy HM riff recycled for expediency.

Lyrically, however, they both fit neatly into the theme of the set: the agony of the professional musician. It could easily have been a disaster; instead, their natural sensitivity and inherent honesty transforms it.

For a bunch of guys who've remorselessly exploited their own 'dumbness' (the dummies being guitarist vocalists Rick Parfitt and Mike Rossi, bassist Alan Lancaster and drummer John Coghlan), it's astounding that they can so sensitively expose the pressures, pain and dubious pleasures of life in a rock'n'roll band.

Paradoxically, the telling of the experiences has a less than cathartic effect. Although 'Rockin' On' is another shot at anthemic tribalism, riddled with suitable positiveness, the rest of the set is gloomy, introspective and doomily pessimistic. There's an air of finality about it all, concluding with 'Breaking Away' which could be a typical 'We Quit' song.

If it is not, then the album certainly reveals that the pressure has got to Quo and there is a recurring theme of escapism: 'Living On An Island', 'Runaway' . . .

Elsewhere they highlight the dilemmas of their lifestyle: the secret affairs ('Shady Lady', 'Your Smiling Face') and touring slavery ('High Flyer', 'Breaking Away'). Admittedly only glimpses of the traumas, they are still revelatory in their unaffected simplicity. And even more successful are the songs about their inability to balance their private relationships with their professional personas, particularly well explained with touching bitterness on 'Who Asked You'.

After all this the title track seems bleaker, more resigned to their fate than it initially sounds.

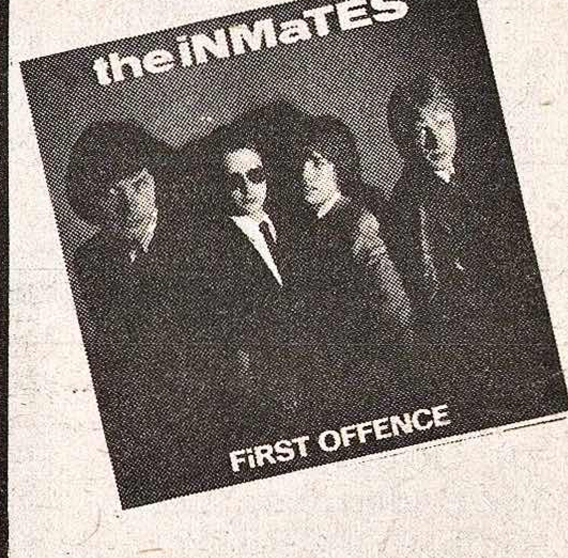
For all this, Quo's reputation as a mindless boogie band unable to articulate anything more than their basic urges makes it difficult to accept that they have the ability to make a critically acceptable album. They're all thump and clout, people argue; emotionless machines entrenched in the early '70s.

That's true — but only as one small facet of their character, and 'Whatever You Want' shows a lot of the others.

Quo 17 years old? It's taken them long enough to make a decent album then.

Tony Stewart

"Wanna be onna my next-a triple LP, Joan?" "I'd rather go down down down, Francis." Pic: Tom Sheehan.



THE INMATES
First Offence *(Radar)*

STILL using that greasy 12-bar stuff? Then you could do a lot worse than check out the first offering from prime London R'n'B exponents The Inmates. The Inmates, on the other hand, could probably do a lot better. . .

The trouble is, I suppose, that the album kicks off too dynamically for its own good — with their heroic re-working of The Standells' gem 'Dirty Water', the recent single and still the finest slice of rock'n'roll life The Inmates have committed to vinyl. Rollicking, raucous and raw, it's the very best way to begin any album, but it sure makes a tough act to follow.

Not that the next track, a 'Get It On' soundalike called 'Love Got Me', is any disgrace, not 'Mr Unreliable' after that. Both members reverberate with enough blues-boom and soul-shout to see the band safely into the exalted ranks of British R'n'B masters, in linear descent from the '64 Stones (of whom The Inmates are uncannily reminiscent in every detail, from cover-art to Bill Hurley's black-and-blue white boy vocals) and right alongside the Feelgoods, Pirates and Bishops.

But elsewhere, some worthy production work from Vic Maile notwithstanding, the songs face a struggle to command the kind of attention they're accustomed to in their natural habitat — classically the small dark cellar, jam-packed and sweat-soaked. Thus their version of Eddie Cochran's 'Jeanie, Jeanie, Jeanie' or their own Chuck Berry-cloned 'Back In History' suffer the common recorded fate of a lot of music of this kind; they come across spirited enough, enthusiastic even, but without personality. When there's a million competing versions about, then the one thing worth cultivating is a little individuality.

And yet, then take a listen to them grab Arthur Conley's 'I Can't Stop' by the scruff of the neck (ably aided and funkily abetted by The Rumour brass section), or Jimmy McCracklin's 'The Walk' likewise, and realise that these men *mean* it, man.

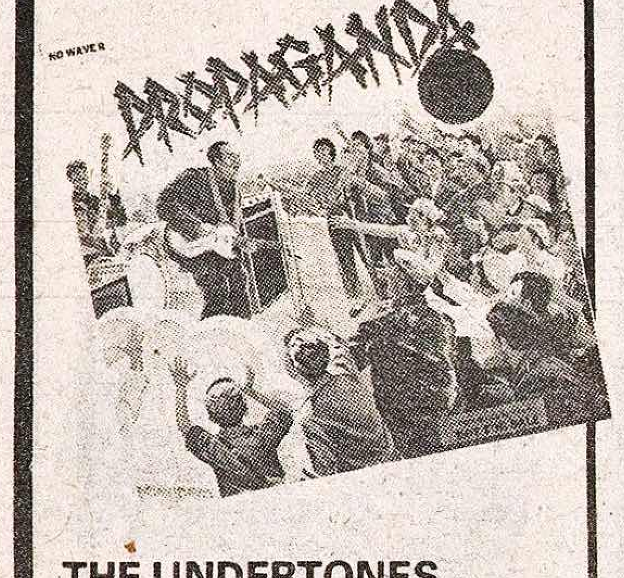
And if the slow, Stax-ballad approach of 'If Time Could Turn Backwards' leaves this listener relatively unmoved, then all indifference gets swiftly kicked out the back door by the big beat bash of something like 'Midnight To Six Man' or the unstoppable stomp of 'I Can't Sleep'.

So it's an uneven work. When The Inmates get to make a record as good as all the peaks of 'First Offence', with all the troughs ironed out, then they will have made a classic. For the present they've just made a very good debut album, and served notice of some great stuff to come.

Turn your back on them at your peril.

Paul Du Noyer

Coming over all unnecessary



THE UNDERTONES
The Undertones *(Sire)*
VARIOUS ARTISTS
Propaganda *(A&M)*
BUZZCOCKS
Going Steady *(A&M (Import)*

THREE ways for the industry to make the reluctant punters take their hands out of their pockets. Two you don't need and one you might that wasn't meant for you anyway.

It's nice to see that the market is getting well and truly penetrated, not to say showered, by the appalling Undertones. This special low-priced re-issue of their hit album with the added pre-Xmas lure of 'Teenage Kicks' and 'Get Over You' successfully makes an even bigger sap of everybody who bought the records in the first place.

The Undertones are the perfect group for people who wish Buzzcocks had never felt obliged to grow up: puerile adolescent punk-pop from the sort of boys who write letters to the Cathy And Claire page. Their acned, hackneyed but so sharply produced stew of Clash, Buzzcocks and Ramones must sound just fine if you were too young for the originals or can't remember why they came into being in the first place, but this teenage regression business has got to stop. An irrelevant re-issue of an already pathetic record.

A&M's 'Propaganda' exercise is equally redundant, though a pound cheaper. Two cuts apiece from Squeeze (one live, the other dating from their first single sessions with John Cale), Joe Jackson and The Police (both live) plus a selection of lesser stablemates riding on their coat-tails.

Squeeze acquit themselves modestly, while Joe Jackson ruins Chuck Berry's 'Come On' and reminds you of what an overbearing fool he is as he plays the English tough in front of a Yankee crowd. Poor old Graham Parker must be kicking himself. Elvis Costello must be laughing. If you think Jackson can bring anything new or even worthwhile to their formulas then whatever it is you're welcome to it.

Nor do The Police emerge from this shoddy package with their badges gleaming. It's one thing to play punk fast, quite another to play ancient English hard rock and kid yourself you're playing punk. 'Landlord' and 'Next To You' will come as a shock to anyone seduced by the singles. Sting's voice is non-existent, and evidence of their music's reputed subtleties is outweighed by the frenzied mess they get themselves in trying to sound exciting.

The Buzzcocks album, their first American release, is a compilation of the A and B sides of six of their singles, from 'Orgasm Addict' on, and is the ideal gift in this age without auto-changers. Of course, you can still buy all these singles in their original sleeves and the price works out roughly the same, so there isn't a lot to recommend this album beyond its obvious merits as the definitive run-down of everything you always wanted to know about The Undertones, and a vital part of the inspiration for the new pop age.

Hear Pete Shelley become progressively more confused and uncertain as he runs the gamut of his obsessions, starting with the sharp irony of 'What Do I Get?' and ending on the previous, badly-judged irony of 'Everybody's Happy Nowadays'.

This is the best album Buzzcocks never made. Hear it and weep.

Paul Rambali

Maher and Shelley wonder what's gone wrong. Pic: Chris Gabrin.

TONY BANKS
A Curious Feeling
(Charisma)

AND as rock struggles onward into a new decade, a new era, here's the ball on the end of the chain.

Boring old bands are one thing, but the solo off-shoots of said associations are something more ghastly altogether. Like an ant that chances past a trick-mirror and swells to a fearsome monster, this debut offering from the Genesis keyboard-player Tony Banks sees the very tiniest of ideas inflated into grandiloquent works of posturing pomposity and lumbering redundancy.

"Now at last I find a meaning in scenes of life / That made no sense to me before / And the complicated structures of scientific knowledge / Once just mad, they seem so simple now" — of such slight, trite mouthings, clumsily expressed is this album composed, and all smeared over some meandering Mantovani-music dressed up in sophisticated electronic technology.

Banks' ersatz symphonic synthesizer combines with grey and next-to-invisible vocals (Kim Beacon) across elaborate constructions of lovingly-tended dreariness, uninspired, unexcited, out to proverbial lunch.

Lyrical themes, like Infinity blah blah blah, not to mention spiritual revelation dot dot dot, merge imperceptibly into sweeping minor-key washes of sound, embellished with this, that and everything else. Platitude profundities rear up out of political mystifications which parade in the name of 'common-sense'.

This album will retail at £4.65.

Paul Du Noyer

SAD CAFE
Facades *(RCA)*

. . . AND for those who've just tuned in, this is *Nightcap* on Radio Zzz. Bringing us up to the 4am news, we continue our weekly foray into Blandland. In the past, we featured big names like Yes, Genesis, Andy Williams and, uh, Supertramp, but tonight we've found something special for all you jilted 10cc fans and migraine sufferers out there.

Still lukewarm off the presses, it's a new LP called 'Facades' by a Manchester group called Sad Cafe who have a big following in Lancashire, recently made an astrodome-hopping tour of the USA supporting rock giants like Santana, Rush and The Outlaws, and even as we speak are crackin' that Fabulous 40.

Anyway, night-owls, back to the album. There are ten tracks to get your gums into, all written by the band themselves, and most of them sound uncannily similar to what we've heard before when *Nightcap* played tunes from ELO, 10cc and The Beatles circa *Magical Mystery Tour.*

So whether you're busy ironing hankies, or just grooving with a mug of Horlicks, there is bound to be something on this record to lower your pulse-rate and reassure you that it doesn't necessarily take so-called inspiration, originality or vitality to make a rock album these days. Just the motions. And the ability to churn out one flaccid piece of MOR tedium after the other, and to put in lots of soft tinsel textures, lots of beaty boogie sequences, and not a few bevel-honed guitar solos that would be quite at home on a Carpenters compilation.

Stay tuned to Sad Cafe on Radio Zzz, and we'll keep you yawning 'til morning.

Rick Joseph

WHATEVER YOU WANT AT THE PRICE YOU WANT IT.

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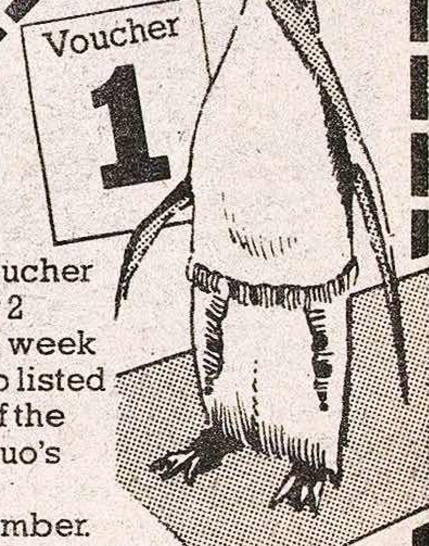

Take this Voucher with Voucher 2 appearing next week to any HMV Shop listed for an extra 50p off the list price of Status Quo's 'Whatever You Want.' Offer valid until 3rd November.

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Shirts get collared

THE SHIRTS
Street Light Shine *(EMI)*

ANNIE Golden sings — it's that same ageless, faceless session girl who's introduced under a thousand pseudonyms on Radio 2, but for the sake of argument we'll call her Annie Golden, singing today with a band of similar representation, The Shirts.

The music, typically, is light, clear, melodic schmaltz, unobtrusive background warblings that only become ingratiating if you actually listen to them, and no-one listens to Radio 2 — that's not what it's for. Radio 2 is for businessmen sitting in traffic jams engrossed in working out their shares profits, for old ladies in hairdressing salons making up their shopping lists, and factory workers in canteens doing the football pools. It satisfies a psychological need for background noise, muzak, yet it is subtle enough, or shall we say bland enough, not to distract. No new ideas, clever arrangements or memorable hooklines please.

Annie and her Shirts abide by all the rules and could secure themselves a wealth of Radio 2 plays, Des O' Connor Show guest spots, and probably a few lunchclub residencies thrown in to cap. This album proves their lack of innovation and versatility beyond all doubt, and if all they want is to be a background noise their looks a promising future.

Annie's voice isn't really golden, it's just shiny and bright. You can hear the lyrics (for what they're worth) clearly, and she can stay in tune, but there's no real depth or weight to her voice.

Debbie Harry's another Annie Golden, but she's carried along by a much more distinctive image, and supported by good pop songs with catchy beats and an enthusiastic band, which upgrades (?) Blondie to Radio 1 and *TOTP* status.

The Shirts cautiously flirt with the Blondie formula in their first couple of numbers, but it's only a flirtation you understand, a tease, nothing of any real substance: *"Love is a fiction (title)/Made up out of friction/And I'm so glad I'm through/With that addiction"*. Can't you just imagine Debbie Harry on those lyrics, the music stopping momentarily for Debbie to drop the last line in that pert, alluring, resonant style that is perpetuated so frequently in Blondie's popular numbers? Well Annie tries the same and comes out with a flat, obviously imitative, plaintive bleat. Picture that.

Change of style, introducing brass and woodwinds for a jazzy quickstep 'Milton At The Savoy', which begs for Feet and Co. dance troupe visual aids in a lively, waiter-attended and cocktail-served disco-for-the-aristocracy stage setting. This is the bit where you switch channels to see what film's on the other side, or tap your feet in absent-minded irritation to the radio.

The different tone and tempo here gives you a nudge and keeps you awake, as does 'Out On The Ropes' (cue flute and violin) which gives that same subtle wink, a blink away from the monotony that would make you switch off. It's these slight fluctuations that keeps your psyche tuned into toleration background noise.

And The Shirts know that's all they are. Annie sings about it in the spacey theme 'Triangulum', tinkling keyboards and floating vocals: *"Look around, there's many like me/Maskless people, faceless people"* — glued to the box or the radio, but not seeing or hearing anything.

What better note to finish the album on then, than a *Stars On Sunday* choir-like rendition of 'Outside The Cathedral Door', with an instrumental to follow — the testcard, which you mindlessly endure for 3.38 mins before switching off.

Deanne Pearson

Annie Golden in contrasting moments. Top: Annie goes cute in an attempt to get the lead in her namesake stage play. Below: She turns one over the bar in the recent Shirts vs NME charity shield.

RORY GALLAGHER
Top Priority *(Chrysalis)*

THE Quiet Man is back, as far away from the blues as anywhere he's been since Taste.

Rory Gallagher's three-piece specialises in bolshy belters that veer uncomfortably close to middleweight HM. It's supremely competent rock music, of course, because Rory can play the guitar better and faster than most headbanging merchants. And that makes 'Top Priority' even more meaningless, really.

Gerry McAvoy plonks the bass, Ted McKenna bashes the drums and Rory goes diddly-diddly doodley-squat all over the shop. He's ever so good at it but his voice is vaguely colourless and curiously uninviting as early as 'Follow Me' the opening track.

All the numbers are fast except 'Keychain', which owes more to the heavily phased, other-worldly style of Robin Trower than any blues I've ever heard, 'Off The Handle', a 12-bar with harp and 'Bad Penny', a sluggish, messy mish-mash. You can tell 'Philby' was the token single by the "Yeah, yeah, yeah" chorus, the handclaps and the electric sitar break. And Rory gets out the slide sometimes ('at The Depot').

Rory's written all nine songs and they're published by Strange Music. Funny, that.

Monty Smith

TOM JOHNSTON
Everything You've Heard Is True *(Warner Bros)*

SURE, the name strikes a familiar chord — the same damn one used over and over again on many of the songs Johnston wrote and whined with The Doobie Brothers until he jumped ship in '77. Quite why he quit I can't remember, but it can't have been the usual "difference of musical policy". This album sounds exactly like another predictable Doobie dollop.

All the over-familiar scrub guitar licks abound (most notably on 'Down Around The River', chordwise a nick from Stevie Wonder's 'Living For The City', and 'Savannah Nights'), as does Johnston's anaemic blue-eyed hernial soul splutter — a thin, strained pastiche of the AWB's Alan Gorrie and Stevie Winwood.

In the accompanying handout, Johnston claims first solo endeavour to be "a positive album", adding, "because there are a varied amount of styles and textures, it will baffle those who find it a necessity to neatly catagorize." Quite the contrary ol' son, you've done that little exercise all by yourself.

This album is top-heavy with clinical, well-drilled Doobieisms, and often degenerates into Johnston liberally borrowing from his own rag-bag of cliches: another example of style being reduced to mannerisms. Despite its short playing time, Doobie devotees will no doubt regard it as an extremely safe purchase, because it doesn't deviate one iota from the formula Johnston helped create A more apt title would have been 'Everything You've Heard, You've Heard Before'.

Roy Carr

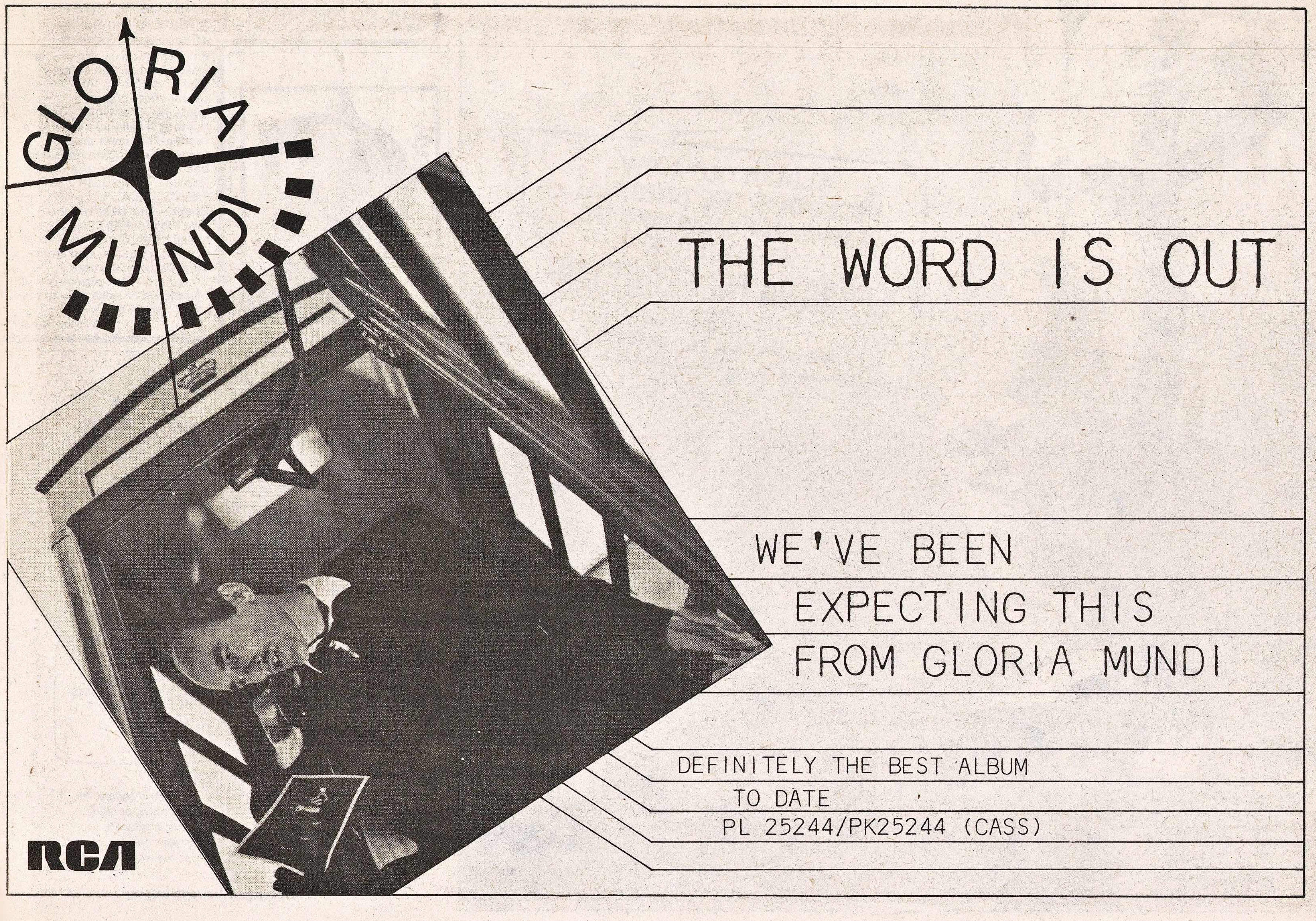
VAPOUR TRAILS
Vapour Trails *(Warner Bros)*

THE musical equivalent of a job creation scheme, anyone? 'Vapour Trails' is session man rock of the Toto ilk, guitars blending smoothly, harmonies absorbing Bee Gees and Eagles mannerisms into an oh-so-homogeneous whole. And they're English — the shame of it!

Yet, like many bargain bin occupants, Vapour Trails are unquestionably famous by association. Drummer Steve Holly is now a Wing and consequently uncredited on the sleeve — he and his bank manager should worry. The other three once played with Arthur Brown, who would surely choke on such dismal conformity.

Did Larry Carlton really leave The Crusaders to produce stuff like this? Blow away, little smoke rings.

Harry George



Final nail in Pleasers' coffin

Searchers — There is life after Batley's: official

SEARCHERS
Searchers *(Sire)*

AN immaculate return to prominence by one of Britain's most influential groups ever. They've come up with a seamless blend of pop, country and rock'n'roll that's so effortlessly fine it's enough to make Rockpile give up in despair. But then they have had a lot of practice . . .

Pop historians have rarely given The Searchers their due. In the early '60s it was all too easy to write them off as just another Merseybeat group riding The Beatles' coat tails. Easy, but wrong.

From the beginning, they never sounded like nasal Moptop copiers. The Searchers favoured high soaring harmonies and brisk rhythmic songs, and on their very first album, circa 1963, they invented folk-rock. Among the tracks was a version of 'Where Have All The Flowers Gone' which did for that creaking anthem what The Byrds were later to do for 'Mr Tambourine Man', transforming it into a stylish little pop song, all the more engaging for its restraint. Not that 'Flowers' was a one-off. The Searchers always played like that, five or six years before California decided such music was hip.

Ah well, such is the frequent fate of true innovators.

For the past decade The Searchers have been consigned to the scrap heap, or more accurately (and even worse) to the Northern Club circuit. Music to eat scampi to. But now, thanks to the shrewdness of Sire Records, The Searchers are poised once more for greatness.

Still there from the original line-up are Mike Pender (vocals and indispensable 12-string) and John McNally (lead and rhythm guitars). They're crisply supported by Frank Allan (bass) and Billy Adamson (drums).

Basically, two things have happened. The Searchers have been properly produced for the first time ever (take a bow, Pat Moran at Rockfield), and the guys have assembled a batch of fresh, tasty songs tailor-made for their distinctive style.

The opener 'Hearts In Her Eyes' is by Messrs Birch and Wicks of The Records, and The Searchers invest it with more vigour than The Records themselves have ever managed. The trademark jangling guitars recall the splendid 'Needles And Pins', but Moran's given the sound a much harder edge. The surging chorus suggests an easy chart single.

On Mickey Jupp's 'Switchboard Susan' the rhythm section nod in the direction of Dire Straits, though the unmistakeable Searchers vocals eschew all that growling machismo. As a bonus, Mr Jupp has one of his wittier lines: *"I look at you girl/I get an extension."*

Another outstanding track on side one is a group original, 'This Kind Of Love Affair'. A great, corny pop song, lovingly rendered.

Overleaf, there's yet another obvious single 'It's Too Late'. Standard schmaltzy lyrics about a broken romance, but one of those clean-cut melodies that just won't go away.

The ironically titled 'No Dancing' is the real gem, though. Reminiscent of The Motors' 'Dancing The Night Away', only paraplegics will be able to resist it.

All in all, I can't wait to see the guys back onstage, and hear their music flooding the airwaves again. The only mystery is why they've been away so long. Their absence certainly did a lot of upstarts a lot of favours. But now they're back . . . watch out.

Bob Edmands

ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION
Underdog *(Polydor)*

THE Atlanta Rhythm Section are six good ol' boys from the Peanut State, six long-haired anonymous boogie merchants who wouldn't know Rigour if it bit them in the seat of their Levis, and they make some of the easiest rock 'n' roll listening there is.

They've been doing it for seven years now, and they'll carry right on doing it whether you or I give two damns about it; it's what they do, and what comes out is albums you can stack like singles and ease through the night on an endless stream of clean, mellow blues-rock.

Like their previous five Polydor albums, 'Underdog' was produced by ARS manager Buddy Buie at the Doraville, Georgia, studio he co-owns with rhythm guitarist J. R. Cobb. As ever the musicianship is a study in lazy excellence, fronted by Barry Bailey's indelibly Southern Gibson and Ronnie Hammond's understated vocals, somewhere twixt Lowell George and James Taylor.

Unfortunately, *unlike* the previous sets, there's a dearth of good songs here for them to get stuck into — no 'Cuban Crisis', 'So In To You' or 'Angel'. And unfortunately (2), though they never were a hard-edged band, their soft centre is on this set dangerously close to mush.

What the hell, they've still got the feel that appeals. Excuse me while I indulge myself.

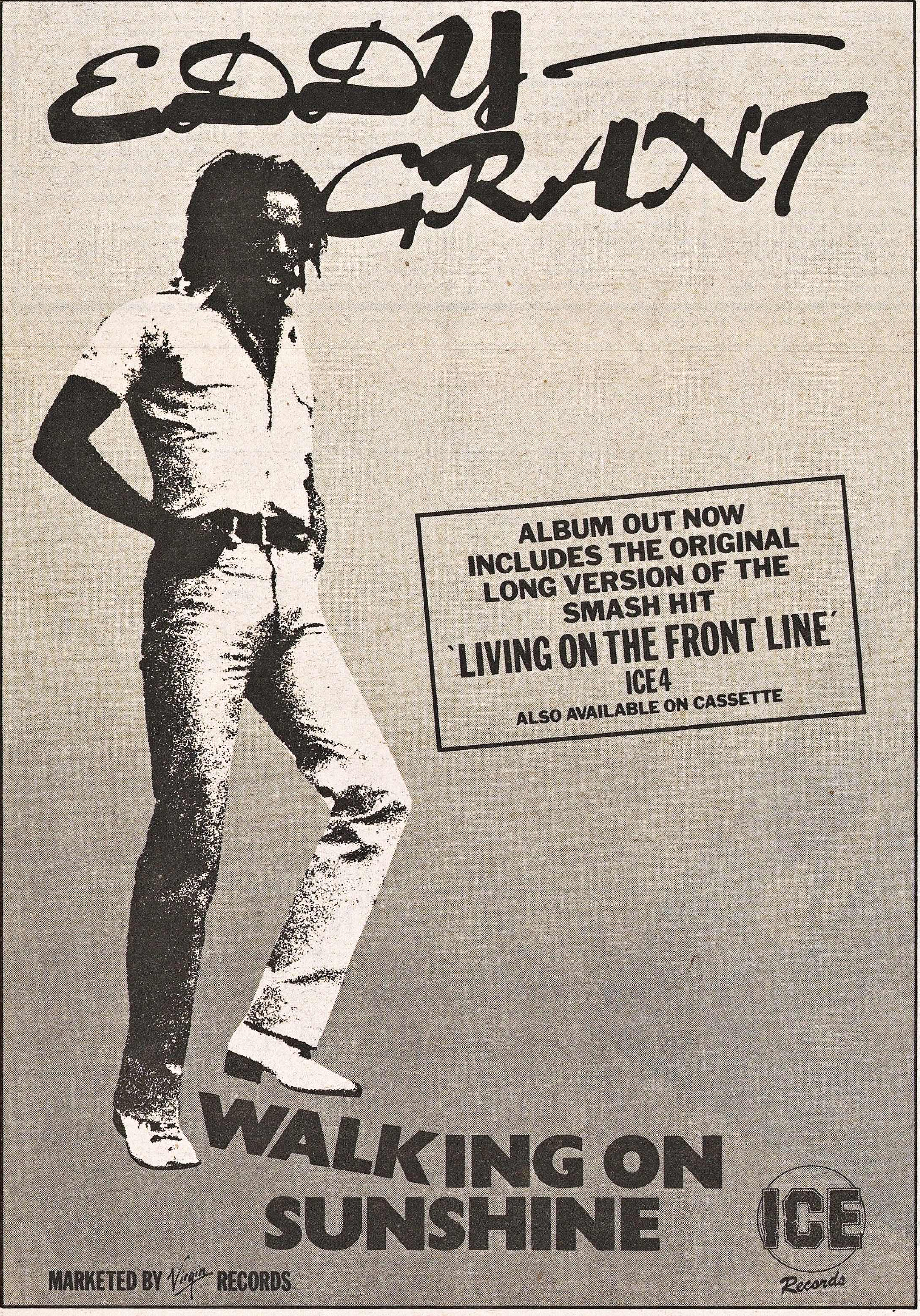
Phil McNeill

VARIOUS ARTISTS
A Night At Studio 54
(Casablanca Import)

A compilation selling on the 'magic' name. The austere sleeve gatefolds into lots of colour shots of people 'partying'. *You* won't get in, but they'll sell you a slice for a tenner. The tracks are overworked and obvious and badly programmed. 'Instant Replay', 'In The Bush', 'Le Freak', 'YMCA', 'Let's All Chant' — it's all so old too. Like the building these days, it's all nicely designed, devoid of passion, overpriced and done better elsewhere.

I wonder if shopkeepers will be advised to sell it only to the 'right' sort of buyer?

Danny Baker



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Moan, moan moan . . .

Tull and 'Trax wax prophetic about the horrors in store for anyone who dares leave the house today

JETHRO TULL
Stormwatch *(Chrysalis)*

IAN Anderson must have been invented by God as a definitional aid for the word "pretentious". Having grown tired of playing the country squire, he now wants to be none other than (low rumble of tympani) . . . The Prophet!

Trouble is, he's got sod-all to say that's not totally, utterly banal, an unfortunate state of affairs which results in 'Stormwatch' sounding like nothing so much as Walter Gabriel reading portents in the weather.

Anderson's trite ecological message can be gleaned from the cover — warmly-wrapped Anderson peering through binoculars whilst behind him a giant Polar Bear tramples over an ice-bound oil refinery: Great White Bear behind Great White Bore. In the accompanying press release, he comes up with this piece of cant: "As a farmer, I'm aware that just a half degree annual temperature change makes a hell of a difference, and we suffer those kind of changes, or more, in between 11 and 15 year cycles — I'm very aware of those kind of long term weather trends."

Humbug! As any fule kno, fifteen years ago Ian Anderson was a penniless old goat in Blackpool, where the only thing affected by weather cycles is the tourist industry. Which is slightly less romantic than global disaster, and considerably less enjoyable than the money-fed indulgences of a nouveau-riche gentleman-farmer turned megalomaniac, whose sincerity of ecological vision stretches as far as unleashing another slab of aural pollution on the world, one whose production will doubtless have done its little bit to chip away at the ozone layer and the world's woodpulp and vinyl resources. *Very* thoughful of him.

'Stormwatch' consists of four songs and one instrumental per side, none of which is worth mentioning by name. All are typically Tull, which is to say that they all conform to what the band fondly believe to be an evocation of Olde Worlde Britain (note the weatherbeaten rusticity of the vocals), but which is more likely a romantic fantasy based on cartoon rurality, re-runs of Richard Greene as Robin Hood, and a honny-nonny-no fair maiden. Pathetic. Shifts a good few units Stateside, mind.

Next week: The Wurzels develop a social conscience and solve the Middle East conflict.

Andy Gill

ANGLETRAX
Angletrax *(Ariola)*

THE debut offering from Angletrax turns out to be a dark, sickly-oppressive experience. Wallowing in bitter irony, its acidic lyrics trickle over booming doomy jazz-runs and panicky funk.

I doubt if it's an easy album to like or enjoy — I know I've managed to do neither yet. The music bores me and the words make me miserable. But if we're to look at this thing positively then it could be conceded that Angletrax have precisely achieved what seems to be their over-riding artistic aim, namely the portrayal of modern life in a disintegrating city as sourly perceived through young and cynical eyes — cynical as in the definition which holds there's always an idealist under the unscratched surface.

Thus they run the gamut of racism, urban deprivation, loveless sex and physical violence, pollution, spiritual stagnation and suburban isolation. Singer Wendy Herman treats her themes in a duly jarred and jarring way, bleak and aggressive and erratic. The wit and invention of songs like 'God And Chips' (geddit?) or the recent single 'Things To Make And Do' is undeniable, even if their constant opting for the easy rhyme gets irritating.

The instrumentalists — Lin Jammet on guitar, drummer Dan Who, bass-player Martin Heath and Jerry Minge on keyboards — sound like a notably competent bunch, but Angletrax as a whole give an impression of cleverness still looking for powers of emotional expression.

Paul Du Noyer

Angletraxer Wendy Herman displays her split personality. Sometimes she's unhappy, at other times just plain miserable.

EDDIE HENDERSON
Running To Your Love *(Capitol)*
BOBBY LYLE
Night Fire *(Capitol)*

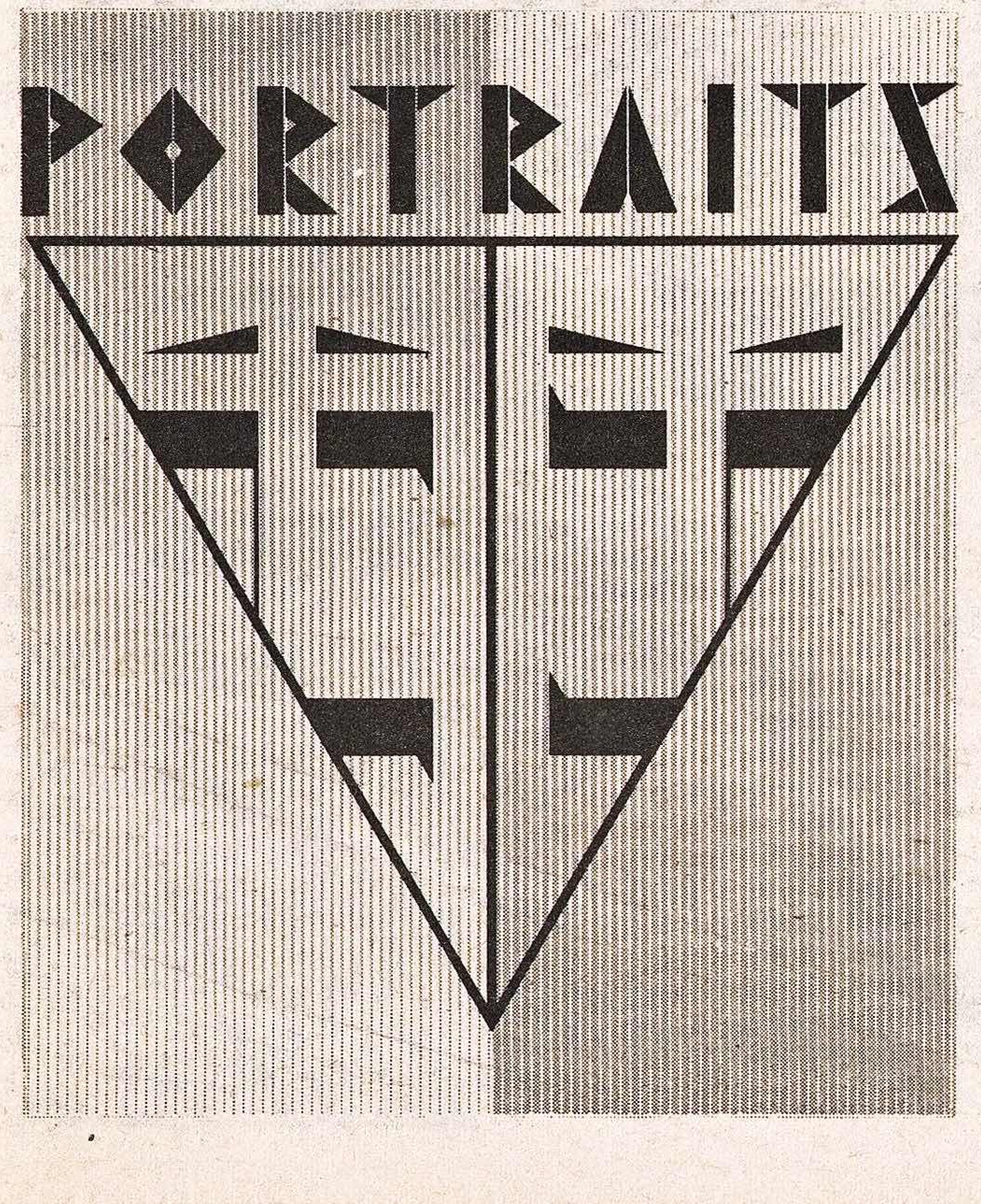
IT'S preposterous that two LPs that make so many references to 'love' should be so completely devoid of feeling. Both these artists have jazz backgrounds and yet have no loyalty or courage and so little conviction to any type of music that they have to sell out to everyone in order to please.

Doubtless, if asked, both Henderson and Lyle would say they are taking the freedom of jazz and adapting it to a disco situation whilst maintaining their grasp of essentials, or some such shameful drivel. But we know what their business managers have advised them to do . . .

The music contained here is as shallow as anything any hotel lobby could offend you with, minute after minute of passion-drained and tuneless pap, trumpets and keyboards doddling over George Benson guitar pupil classes, low and wobbly 'sexy' male vocals that are so sincere, baby, they make you wanna lead a better life, my sugar sweet uh-huh.

Real rubbish. Thank you.

Danny Baker



Ol' pink eyes is back

EDGAR WINTER
The Edgar Winter Album
(Blue Sky)

WHILE Johnny Winter is the undisputed master of blues pastiche, his brother Edgar is no less gifted when it comes to R&B and soul.

When Edgar made his first albums at the end of the '60s his screeching, over-elaborate vocal style was more than somewhat painful. But years of experience with a variety of bands, including personnel like the one-time guitar prodigy Rick Derringer, appear to have matured his approach.

This new set is strictly a solo offering with Edgar writing and singing all the songs and playing the lead instruments too. To record it, he went to Sigma Sound in Philadelphia, the studio responsible for dozens of hit singles by the O'Jays, Detroit Spinners, Detroit Emeralds and the like. Edgar also engaged the services of the distinguished Philly-based producer Tom Moulton. The result is an album that's up there alongside the best work the studio ever produced. By that, I'm not intending to damn it with faint praise.

Songs like 'It's Your Life To Live', 'Above And Beyond' and 'Please Don't Stop' are classy, danceable little masterworks, with Edgar displaying much taste and sensitivity. A couple of ballads, 'Dying To Live' and 'Forever In Love', show that he can handle big emotional themes with the best of them. The problem at the end of it all, though, is why should you want to invest in this record, when there are so many albums by The O'Jays, Spinners, Emeralds, etc., available cut-price in the secondhand shops?

A professional, soulful LP, but far from unique.

Bob Edmands

Edgar (right) shows Johnny some of that old Suth'n hospitality. Pic: Joe Stevens.

LEO SMITH
Divine Love *(ECM)*

TRUMPETER Leo Smith has made surprisingly few appearances on record, even though he's been around since the days of Chicago's AACM in the '60s. This release at last confirms him as a major voice.

Three pieces demonstrate Smith's dual approach. The two long cuts are examples of 'rhythm units', the idea being that every sound, rhythm or group of same is in itself a complete composition and has its own relative equivalence in the silence that follows each. Clear so far? Well, whatever the theory it makes for a riveting tonescape.

The 22 minutes of 'Divine Love' itself pass like a dream. The three musicians achieve a phenomenal empathy: Bobby Naughton's vibes chime and shimmer, notes bleeding into each other while Dwight Andrews' flute hovers hazily. Smith applies scratchy, tinkly percussion at the start and plays majestic, bell-toned trumpet forays into the ether.

'Spirituals: The Language of Love' is possibly even better. Bass master Charlie Haden joins in and his guess-ahead abilities are deployed to stunning effect, prowling each of the players in turn. His brief solo passage towards the end is deliciously bumpy and startling. Charles Haden scares me. There are moments on this track when the players suddenly coalesce and then drop into silence and which achieve an almost supernatural quality. The final spiky unison springs out of the speakers like a tiger.

Likewise the remaining number 'Tastalus' is scored for three muted trumpets and is the sole example of 'ahkreanvention', Smith's system of notation which substitutes sound and improvisation 'staffs' for notes and bars. As with the rhythm unit concept it blends composition and improvisation into a proper, cohesive whole. House favourites Kenny Wheeler and Lester Bowie join Smith to produce an eerily effective montage, making their horns cry, snap and chatter. The sounds linger long in the mind.

OK, I'll state my case: I've heard no finer new music this year, and certainly nothing as innovatory as this. Leo Smith proves on this set that the gaps are important too and this punter at least is hoping that the man will see out the blare-and-fizzle fusioneers. Whose side are you on?

Richard Cook

IMPORTS

Fred Dellar

JULES SHEAR is two sad eyes peering out from beneath black candy floss, plus two bare feet protruding from crumpled jeans. Jules Shear is a spiked Martini voice, almost classy but with a wayward edge. Jules Shear is a pop songwriter and he leads **Jules and The Polar Bears**, a U.S. West Coast band whose second album 'fanetiks' (CBS) is now residing at all reputable import establishments. Despite the inclusion of a dumb lyric sheet, in the form of a phonetic translation by the UCLA linguistics department — which means that it's virtually unreadable — 'fanetiks' is a marvellously conceived release. For Shear has fashioned ten well-rounded songs that come replete with melodies, hooks and all the other requirements of upper-class popdom.

However pop alone is not enough, as The Rubinoos and others of their ilk have learnt to their misfortune. It's the wrappings, the trappings, the arrangements that keep you hanging on. But here too The Polar Bears — Shear (vocals and guitar), Stephen Hague (keyboards), Richard Beedice (guitars) and David Beebe (drums) — would seem to know what is needed. So they maintain interest by welding street corner 'oop-oohs' onto touch-of-Lennons like 'What Do You Belong To?'; segue today's superhet guitar and keyboard riffs onto yesterday's Bo Diddley rhythms ('All Caked Up'); and even revitalise the age-old call and response vocal routine for 'You're So Complete', another of the 'fanetik' items that simply scream for single exposure. But Jules and The Polar Bears use such devices with subtlety and remain very much a brand readying itself for the '80s. They do not musically ride rusting Lambrettas, barnacled surfboards or yesterday's Merseyrail relics. Which is why they'll probably get there before the rest.

'The Crawdaddys' (Voxx), who also hail from California, obviously wish that they'd really hailed from Eel Pie Island or thereabouts. They style their clothes on Decca 'beat group' cover shots, their guitarist sports a Brian Jones type barnet and their brand of R&B comes with tattered Union Jacks attached. In short, they're very ordinary and could learn a lesson or two from **Alberta Hunter**, who sings her blues-filled heart out on 'Remember My Name' (CBS), the soundtrack to the new Geraldine Chaplin Tony Perkins movie. "The stuff is there and the chicks fairly romp with glee," she proclaims as she skips breezily over the jazz backdrop to the rent-party opus 'My Castle's Rockin' ', dispensing the heart-felt twelve bars with even more authority. But then, Alberta doesn't just sing the blues, she's part of the blues, being the first black singer to ever record with a white band.

"When you sing the blues, let it be classy," she says. At 84 she knows about things like that.

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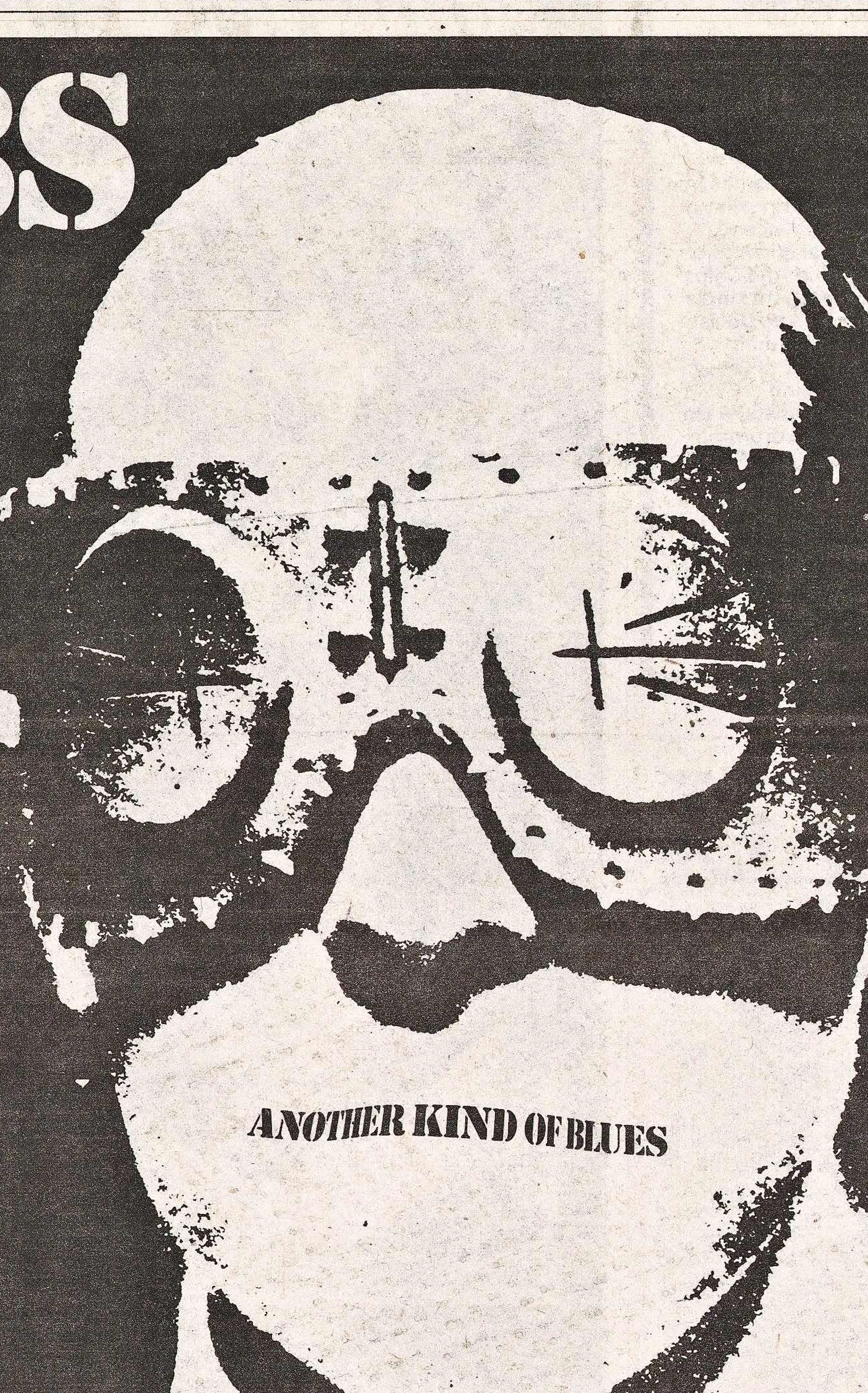

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17 London — *Marquee*
18 London — *Marquee*
19 Scarborough — *Penthouse*
20 Middlesbrough — *Rock Garden*
23 Birmingham — *Digbeth Civic Hall*
25 Port Talbot — *Troubadour*
26 Retford — *Porthouse*
27 Glasgow — *Strathclyde University*
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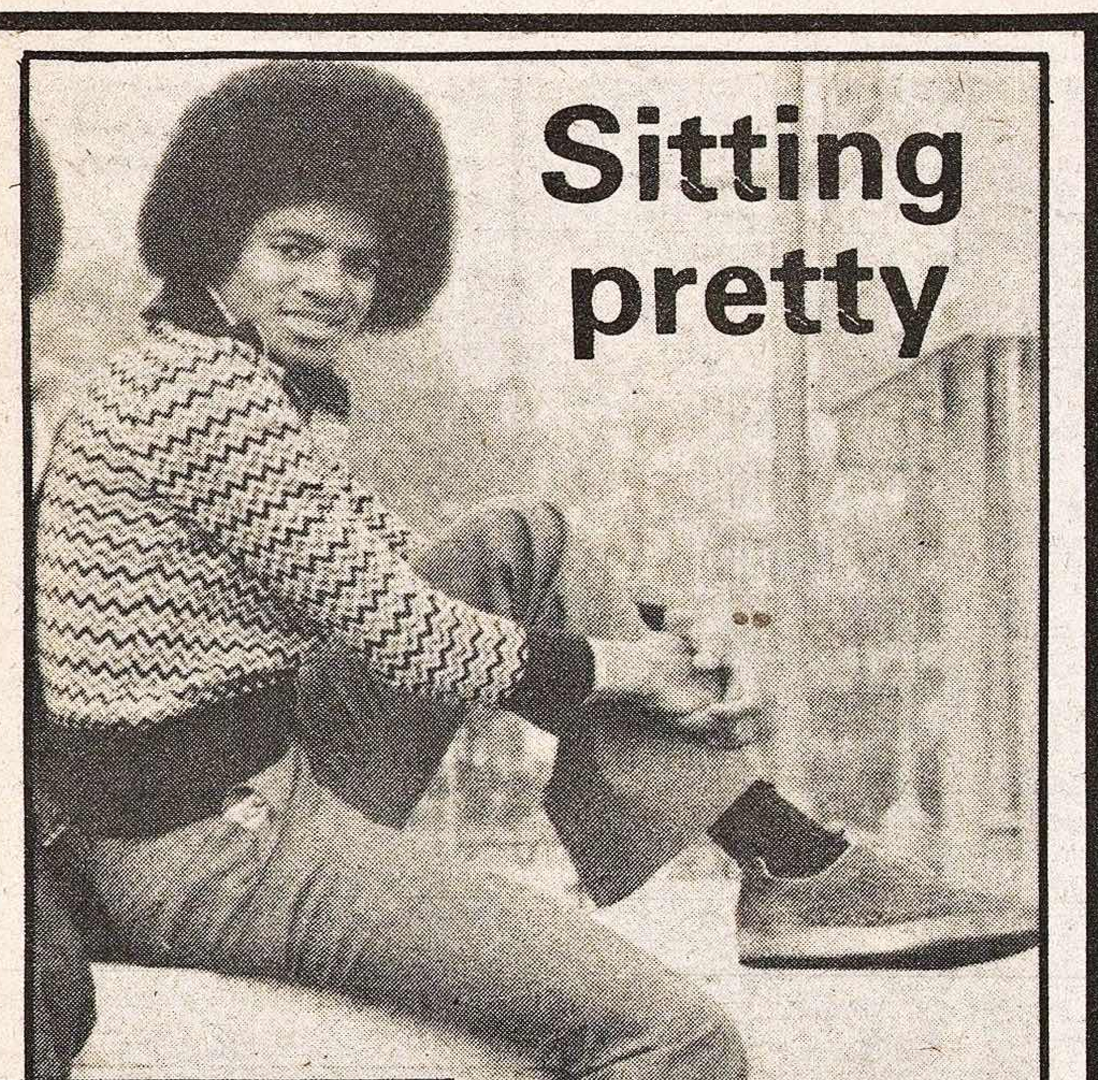

Mr Jackson (above) and Mr Grant relax after their labours.

MICHAEL JACKSON
Off The Wall *(Epic)*
EDDY GRANT
Walking On Sunshine *(Ice)*

If I were boss of Factory Records I'd listen to Michael Jackson's new album and The Isleys' recent 'Winner Takes All', thump the table and mutter to myself "why can't we have *these* guys on the label?"

'Off The Wall' is beautiful music. Lovingly crafted, superbly arranged and topped by the immaculate vocals of Michael Jackson, who's probably the best singer in the world just now in terms of style and technique. His singing is so *graceful*.

Whether he'd be any good at communicationg ideas I don't know, cos the album's only message, regardless of what the lyrics say, is "get up 'n' dance"; and this it puts forward in irresistible fashion.

Side one is mainly disco, dominated by the current single 'Don't Stop Till You Get Enough', a brilliant exercise in streamlined soulful danceability. The second side is more varied, though it's the sinuous disco rhythms of the title track and the closing 'Burn This Disco Down' which are the most immediately satisfying.

Still, he's flawless on the tender ballad 'She's Out Of My Life'; breathes life into McCartney's flimsy 'Girlfriend'; and handles Stevie Wonder's 'I Can't Help It' with as much aplomb as its author would.

Producer Quincy Jones at last forsakes his crossover tendencies and utilises consummate skill in the attempt at perpetual boogie; and the contributions of the guest artists — Wah Wah Watson, Phil Upchurch, George Duke — are for once blended delicately into the overall excellence of the music.

A record that slinks, sways, zips and bounces; matches exuberance with sophistication; and slips effortlessly through the realms of sheer sensuous delight. The most easily enjoyable album of the year. And at number three already in the American Charts, it proves The Jacksons are now more successful than they've ever been.

Another of the year's great dance singles is Eddy Grant's 'Living On The Frontline', which still gets better the more I hear it. Along with his current single 'Walking On Sunshine', which hits a heavier and less accessible groove, and 'Line's' wonderful flip 'The Frontline Symphony', it provides the meat of his new album.

In fact, these three tracks comprise the superb first side of the record, and it was a master stroke to run 'Frontline' straight into 'Symphony'. There's a lovely moment when, just as you think the former is moving into a new phase, that hilarious mock-classical chorus of *"ja-jah la la"* comes galumping in like something out of Monty Python.

Side two is lightweight in comparison; pleasant but not exceptional. Calypso influences run through the music, upfront on 'Dancing In Guyana' and 'Say I Love You' more subtly on the lilting 'Just Imagine I'm Loving You' with its plaintive piano phrases.

If it just lacks that edge of sharpness to make it really special, 'Walking On Sunshine' remains a welcome addition to Eddy Grant's small canon of idiosyncratic pop. And, as usual, he plays and sings nearly everything himself, as well as producing and engineering the album in his own studio and pressing it at his own pressing plant.

He'll soon be making his own sunshine too.

Graham Lock

SHAKIN' STEVENS AND THE SUNSETS
A Legend *(EMI)*

Shakin' Stevens and The Sunsets may not be the greatest rock'n'rollers in the world, but this 1970 session is a veritable rock cheeseburger, with the goodness just oozing out the sides. The credit is undoubtedly producer Dave Edmunds'. One can imagine him having fun on this one, leaning back in the chair at the Rockfield console, knocking back a sample of the local brew and practically pushing the faders up with his feet. So there are abrupt ends of tape, hints of sound break-up, tape hiss, over-the-top echo and a dozen and one other little technicalities of the kind guaranteed to keep Richard Perry awake nights.

But Edmunds makes it work, provides the Sunsets with a recording so live that you can practically hear it breathe when you put in on the turntable. Okay, so it's all re-tread stuff, 'Cast Iron Arm', 'Leroy', 'Flying Saucers,' 'I Hear You Knocking' and other Southgate Royalty perennials. But everything comes up fresher than Our 'Enry at splash-on time. For this, bless its greasy ducktail, is a great re-release. Believe me.

Fred Dellar

AFTER/THE/FIRE

LASER LOVE

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After "One Rule For You" comes "Laser Love", the debut CBS album from After The Fire, featuring both of their big singles.

LASER LIVE...

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12 North Staffordshire Polytechnic
13 Bristol University (SU)
16 Glasgow Strathclyde University
17 Falkirk Callendar Park College
18 Edinburgh Astoria Cinema
19 Aberdeen University
20 Dundee Technical College
21 Arbroath Condor Club
31 York, College of Ripon and York St. John

NOVEMBER
2 UMIST Manchester
3 Keele University
6 Portsmouth Polytechnic
7 Poole Dorset Institute

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Johnny G: sharp natural

JOHNNY G
Johnny G Sharp/Johnny G Natural
(Beggars Banquet)

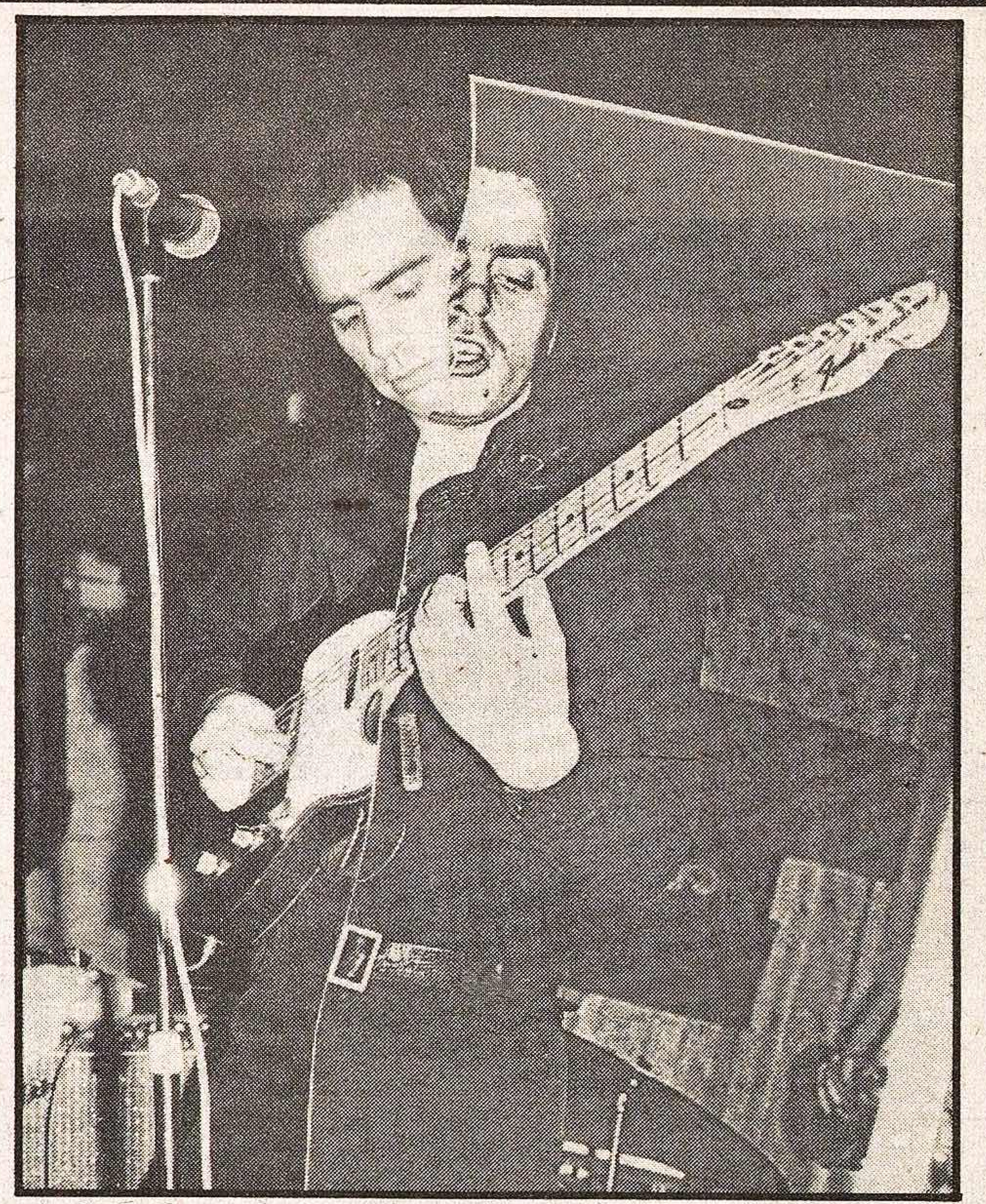
JOHNNY G is what's conventionally known as a 'folk' singer. By that I mean that he plays solo gigs — just a guitar, a bass drum, a hi-hat and a voice — and some of his songs have that introspective hang-over, that hint of 'protest', or just enough dustbowl swing to get them filed as 'folk.'

As this shining debut so plainly proves, he's really nothing of the kind. Just a one-man band experimenting with whatever he wants, but here using a few friends and helpers to back him up. The album has an intriguing width, spanning a spectrum from Woody Guthrie to Muddy Waters to rock 'n' roll to filmscore ballads, with arrangements sounding like anything from jugband honky-tonk to an unassuming grass roots rock and blues. And just to confuse the issue, the Ed Hollis production occasionally veers over to an echoing dub mix to highlight the odd reggae cross-rhythm, high bass and skank guitar.

Johnny G takes just enough from everything to suit his own needs, and very rarely does he let things get serious. Most of his ideas have a conventional base, but he adds an ironic or facetious twist to them. He writes love songs when he isn't in love ('The Golden Years'), he apsires to the things he least expects or desires (in most cases, to be a 'star' — 'You Can't Catch Every Train'). He breaks down barriers between race and creed ('The Blues', 'Theme From Bwana (I Strictly White'), or between audience and performer ('The Educated Monkey'), but in a way that gently ridicules rather than flounders heavy-handedly. It's all music, after all.

He leans on barriers, and they just disappear. That's the way he is. Johnny G's sharp. He's a natural.

Mark Ellen



Sharp/natural Mr G

AFTER THE FIRE
Laser Love *(CBS)*

THE punk pomp of After The Fire sounds a bit like a virile version of Yes at 78 rpm. The band's star turn is one Peter "Memory" Banks, no relation to the original Yes tinkler. Mr Banks tarts up the fast, assertive songs with colourful widescreen keyboard riffs and solos, and his finest moment is a rousing little instrumental called 'Joy', which never surrenders intensity for artiness. 'Joy' is a more substantial achievement than the entire works of Keith Emerson. Technoflash with credibility.

As impressive as Mr Banks is the background vocalist who goes "oooh, oooh, oooh" in all the right places on the best known song here, 'Laser Love'. While hardly as witty as The Boomtown Rats, this lot have the same knack for getting all the component parts just right.

Another impressive piece of dynamic pop is the closing song 'Check It Out'. Singer Andrew Piercy has a voice tailor-made for cute chart singles, and if this particular track never makes it, something on the album surely will soon. CBS should ship After The Fire out to the States as soon as possible; their music is spectacular enough to fill a stadium and sufficiently inoffensive to reassure radio stations.

Bob Edmands

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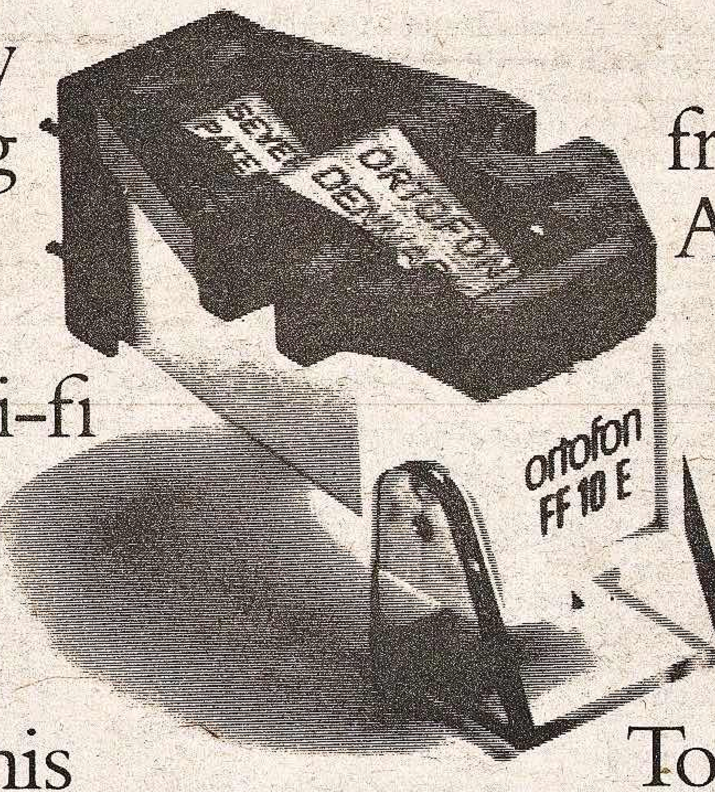

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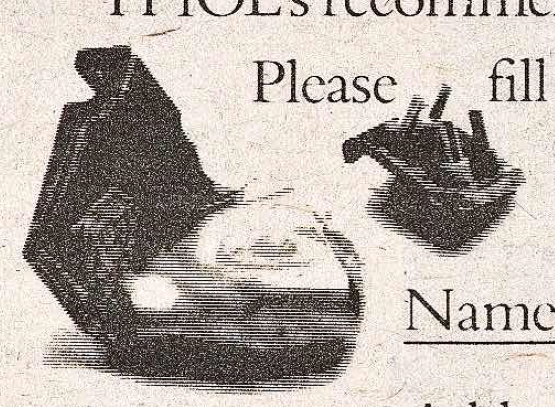

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Bath Pavilion: **The Merton Parkas**
Birmingham Golden Eagle: **Au-Pairs**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **The Clinic**
Birmingham Odeon: **Sky**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Orphan**
Blackburn King George's Hall: **Mary O'Hara**
Blackpool Norbreck Castle: **Squire**
Bournemouth Dorset Institute of Higher Education: **The Sinceros**
Bournemouth Tiffany's: **Flying Saucers**
Bournemouth Town Hall: **The Selecter/Fischer Z**
Brighton Buccaneer: **Airport**
Brighton The Concorde: **Second Nature**
Bristol Polytechnic: **Pressure Shocks**
Burnley Municipal Hall: **The Dooleys**
Burntwood Troubadour: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Chelmsford Odeon: **Siouxsie & The Banshees/The Cure**
Chesterfield Fusion: **Punishment Of Luxury**
Colne Union Hotel: **The Molesters/Tyger Tails**
Coventry Tiffany's: **The Angelic Upstarts**
Crediton Market House: **The Brainiac Five**
Croydon Fairfield Hall: **Loudon Wainwright**
Derby Assembly Rooms: **The Stranglers**
Derby Talk of the Midlands: **The Rhythm Hawks**
Edinburgh Astoria: **The Adverts**
Galway Leisureland Centre: **Leo Sayer**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **The Boomtown Rats/Protex**
Gravesend Red Lion: **Cracked Mirror**
Halesowen Tiffany's: **Money**
Hayes (Middlesex) Adam & Eve: **The Teenbeats**
Hull University: **Madness**
Hull Wellington Club: **Twist**
Ilford The Cranbrook: **First Aid**
Immingham County Hotel: **The Alwoodley Jets/Bombers UK**
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: **Nolan Sisters**
Isle Of Sheppey Island Hotel: **Matchbox**
Kingston Grove Tavern: **D-Notice**
Leeds Fan Club: **Fingerprintz**
Leicester Bailey's: **Slade**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Gillan/Randy California**
Liverpool Eric's: **Destroy All Monsters**
London Battersea Arts Centre: **The Time Flies/A'Quizim**
London Camden Music Machine: **Writz**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Never Never Band**
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Reluctant Stereotypes/3D5**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Speedometers/The Streets**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **The Bumpers**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Camel**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **The V.I.P.'s**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Bogey Boys**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Lacey's Allstars**
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
London Kensington The Nashville: **The Photos/The Innocents**
London Knightsbridge Pizza on the Park: **Ike Isaacs Duo**
London Marquee Club: **No Dice**
London Oxford St. 100 Club: **Eclipse**
London Prince of Wales Theatre: **An Evening With Tommy Steele (for a season)**
London Queen Mary College: **Spitfire**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Johnny Barnes Quartet**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **Ray Smith/Johnny & The Roccos**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The O.K. Band**
London Strand Kings College: **Ricky Cool & The Icebergs**
London Tottenham-Court Rd. Dominion Theatre: **Elkie Brooks**
London Victoria The Venue: **Fat Larry's Band/Slick**
London Waltham Forest North-East Polytechnic: **Remus Down Boulevard**
London Waterloo Royal Victoria: **Freddy's Feetwarmers**
London W.C.1 New Merlin's Cave: **Big Chief**
Manchester Polytechnic: **Stress/John Dowie/Alien Tint**
Manchester The Factory: **The Killermeters/The Fixations**
Middlesbrough Town Hall: **The Sutherlands**
Norwich Cromwells: **Marmalade**
Norwich East Anglia University: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Hormones**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gaffa**
Oxford Polytechnic: **After The Fire**
Plymouth Drake Club: **High Flames**
Portrush Kelly's: **The Buzzcocks**
Portsmouth Guildhall: **Whitesnake / Marseille**
Portsmouth Locarno: **Stiff Little Fingers**
Portsmouth Polytechnic: **The Mekons**
Port Talbot Troubadour: **The Pirates**
Poynton Folk Club: **Terry McCann/Peter Hughes**
Preston Guildhall: **Hot Chocolate**
Reading Target Club: **Chinatown**
Redruth London Inn: **Metro Gliders**
Sandbach Folk Club: **George Gritzbach**
Sheffield Limit Club: **The Jags**
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Weston-super-Mare Sloopy's: **Vitus Dance**
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Wolverhampton Civic Hall: **The Ruts**
Yeovil RNAS Yeovilton: **Yakety Yak**
York University: **Climax Blues Band**

Friday

Aberavon Nine Vaults: **Def Leppard**
Aberdeen University: **The Adverts**
Aberystwyth University: **Speed Limit**
Bath University: **Dean Friedman**
Belfast Kings Hall: **Leo Sayer**
Birmingham Aston University: **The Sutherlands**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Bright Eyes**
Birmingham College of Food: **Dangerous Girls/Denizens**
Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall: **The Selecter**
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **The Traitors**
Birmingham Odeon: **Chic**
Birmingham University: **Judie Tzuke**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Urban Decay**
Bournemouth Winter Gardens: **Sky**
Bradford Palm Cove: **The Angelic Upstarts**
Brentwood Hermit Club: **The Blues Band**
Brighton Dome: **Whitesnake**
Brighton Hanbury Arms: **The Jump/The Lillettes**
Brighton Sussex University: **Wilko Johnson's Solid Senders/Sussex**
Cambridge Corn Exchange: **Stiff Little Fingers**
Cardiff Grass Roots: **Spare Ribs**
Cardiff Great Western: **The Screen Gems**
Carlisle Market Hall: **Darts**
Chatham Central Hall: **Nolan Sisters**
Chelmsford City Tavern: **Swell Maps**
Coventry Ryton Bridge: **Streetlite**
Coventry Warwick University: **Writz**
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: **Slaughter & The Dogs**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **Money**
Dundee University: **The Solos**
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Ingatestone Youth Club: **Bastille**
Keele University: **The Merton Parkas**
Keighley Downtown Club: **The Negatives**
Kettering Windmill Club: **The Bearshank Band**
Kingston Grove Tavern: **Scissor Fits/Ack-Ack**
Lampeter St. David's University: **Racing Cars**
Lancaster University: **The Stranglers**
Letchworth Football Club: **Matchbox**
Liverpool Edge Hill College: **China Street**
Liverpool Eric's: **The Mekons**
Liverpool Merseyside Folk Club: **George Gritzbach**
London Acton Kings Head: **Paz**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Sonja Kristina's Escape/The Brainiac Five**
London Camden Electric Ballroom: **Madness/Echo & The Bunnymen/Bad Manners**
London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Special Branch**
London Central Polytechnic: **Punishment Of Luxury**
London City Polytechnic: **The Smirks/The Vye**
London City University: **Slade**
London Clapham 101 Club: **Tennis Shoes'**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Quads/The Name**
London Edmonton Palm Tree Club: **High Flames**
London Elephant & Castle Southbank Polytechnic: **Pinpoint**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Dogwatch/Spider**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Camel**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Stan's Blues Band**
London Kensington Nashville: **The Piranhas**
London Leicester-Square Notre Dame Hall: **The Streets/Rent Boys/The White Cats**
London Marquee Club: **The Motels**
London New Cross Goldsmiths College: **The Sinceros**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Greig & Nigel's Folk and Blues Night**
London School of African & Oriental Studies: **The Starjets**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Bob Wilber/Brian Dee Trio**
London Stratford North-East Polytechnic: **British Isles**
London Tottenham White Hart: **Gina 'n' The Rockin' Rebels**
London Tottenham-Court Rd. Dominion Theatre: **Elkie Brooks**
London University Union: **Chas & Dave**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Eclipse**
London Victoria The Venue: **Supercharge/Mirage**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Squire**
London Westminster Bridge Rd. The Towers: **Yakety Yak**
Maldon Labour Hall: **Special Duties/Terminal Burnz**
Manchester The Factory: **The Jags**
Manchester The Funhouse: **Armed Force**
Manchester Wythenshawe Centre: **Liam O'Flynn & Paddy Glackin**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **The Show Stoppers**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Saxon**
Newcastle City Hall: **Gladys Knight & The Pips**
Newcastle Mayfair Ballroom: **The Ruts**
Newcastle Polytechnic: **Climax Blues Band**
Newport (Shropshire) Village: **UK Subs/Urge**
Norwich Charing Cross Centre: **Michael Garrick**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Last Call**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Nottingham Trent Polytechnic: **Tours**
Reading Target Club: **Romantix**
Retford Porterhouse: **The Original Mirrors**
Salisbury The Blackbird: **Toulouse**
Scarborough Penthouse: **Kevin Borich**
Scarborough Two Bees: **Best Friends**
Sheffield Limit Club: **The Inmates**
Sheffield Polytechnic: **Lene Lovich/Jane Aire & The Belvederes/The Meteors**
Sheffield Woodhouse Central Club: **Strange Days**
Southend The Alexandria: **Lammagyre**
Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic: **After The Fire**
Swindon Brunel Rooms: **Fat Larry's Band/Slick**
Torquay Pelican Inn: **Metro Gliders**
Uxbridge Brunel University: **The Pirates/The Young Ones**
Uxbridge Unit One: **World Service**
Wakefield Unity Hall: **Penetration**
Wareham Rugby Club: **Lip Moves**
Wolverhampton Merry Hill Folk Club: **John Benns**

Saturday

Aberdeen Art College: **The Squibs**
Aberdeen Capitol Theatre: **Hot Chocolate**
Ayr Darlington Hotel: **Clem Curtis & The Foundations**
Barkingside Old Maypole: **Flying Saucers**
Birmingham Bogarts: **Strider**
Birmingham Hopwood Waterside Club: **Venom**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Strider**
Birmingham Odeon: **Whitesnake**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **School Sports**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Rednite**
Blackburn Peepers: **I.Q. Zero**
Blackpool Norbreck Castle: **The Kidda Band**
Bodmin Jail Club: **Metro Gliders**
Bradford University: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Same**
Brighton Polytechnic: **Madness/The Lambrettas**
Bristol Granary: **World Service**
Bristol Stonehouse: **Essential Bop/The Stingrays**
Bristol Turntable Club: **Souled Out**
Bristol University: **After The Fire/Gina 'n' The Rockin' Rebels**
Burntwood Troubadour: **Ocean Boulevard**
Cambridge Downing College: **The Starjets**
Cardiff Grass Roots: **Fast Breeders**
Chiddingly Six Bells: **The Dials**
Colchester Essex University: **Punishment Of Luxury**
Cork City Hall: **The Buzzcocks**
Coventry Lanchester Polytechnic: **Swell Maps/Last Words**
Coventry Matrix Hall: **Au-Pairs**
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: **Sore Throat**
Derby Bishop Lonsdale College: **The Russians**
Edinburgh Usher Hall: **Lindisfarne**
Exeter University: **Destroy All Monsters**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **Gladys Knight & The Pips**
Glasgow Strathclyde University: **Penetration**
Hanley Odeon: **Leo Sayer**
Hillingdon (Middlesex) Zodiac Disco: **The Injections**
Huddersfield Coach House: **Vardis**
Ilford The Cranbrook: **Raised On Robbery**
Isle Of Sheppey New Island Hotel: **Fat Larry's Band/Slick**
Kingston Grove Tavern: **Carcrash**
Kirkcaldy Birksgate Hotel: **Trax**
Leeds University: **The Stranglers**
Leicester University: **Stiff Little Fingers**
Lewes Landport Community Centre: **The Executives**
Liverpool Eric's: **Slaughter & The Dogs**
Liverpool Metro: **Kevin Borich**
Liverpool The Masonic: **England's National Sport**
Liverpool University: **Racing Cars/The Accelerators**
London Barking North-East Polytechnic: **Charlie Ainley & The Misdemeanors**
London Camden Brecknock: **Tennis Shoes**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Soulyard/The Rave**
London Camden Electric Ballroom: **The Selecter/The Mo-dettes/The Beat**
London Camden Music Machine: **Wilko Johnson's Solid Senders/Sussex**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Dave Edwards/Rod De'Ath/Lou Martin/Chris Glenn**
London Chelsea College: **The Merton Parkas**
London Clapham 101 Club: **Paris**
London City University: **Bill Caddick/Sean Cannon/Martin Simpson/The Watersons/Roaring Jelly/Vin Garbutt/Bob Davenport**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Danny Adler Band**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Ricky Cool & The Icebergs**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Carol Grimes Band/The Trendies**
London Lewisham Odeon: **Siouxsie & The Banshees/The Cure**
London Marquee Club: **Fingerprintz**
London Peckham Newlands Tavern: **Billy Karloff Band**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Boston**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Bob Wilber/Brian Dee Trio**
London Southall Hamborough Tavern: **The Boners**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Big Chief**
London Tottenham-Court Rd. Dominion Theatre: **Elkie Brooks**
London University: **Gang Of Four**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Eclipse**
London Victoria The Venue: **Aswad/Revelation**
London Waterloo The Wellington: **The Hidden Charms**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Photos**
London Woolwich Thames Polytechnic: **The Piranhas**
Loughborough University: **Lene Lovich/Jane Aire & The Belvederes/The Meteors**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Camel**
Manchester Polytechnic: **The Teenbeats/The Smirks**
Manchester The Factory: **The Ruts/The Flys**
Manchester The Funhouse: **The Passage/The Mediators/Grow Up**
Manchester UMIST: **Nutz/Saxon/Iron Maiden/Neal Kay's Bandwagon**
Manchester University: **The Sutherlands**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **The Show Stoppers**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **The Mekons**

GLADYS KNIGHT & The Pips

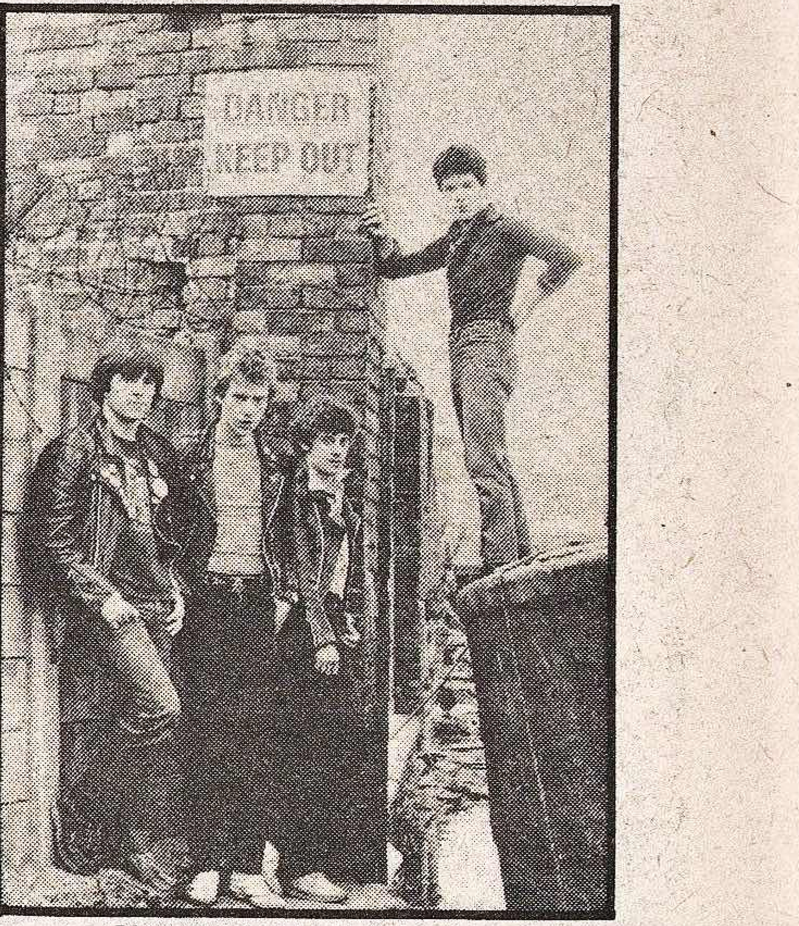
THE WEEK'S

ANOTHER very busy week on the circuit, with the autumn tour campaign building up to a crescendo, reaching its peak around the end of this month and in early November. With tours a-plenty already on view, here's the full run-down of this week's latest batch, starting with two which — for space reasons only — we've been unable to cover pictorially:

● ***WHITESNAKE,*** *now boasting three former Deep Purple members and with their new album 'Love Hunter' currently on release, start their most important UK outing to date at Portsmouth (Thursday), Brighton (Friday), Birmingham (Saturday), Preston (Monday), Glasgow (Tuesday) and Edinburgh (Wednesday). Marseille are the support act.*

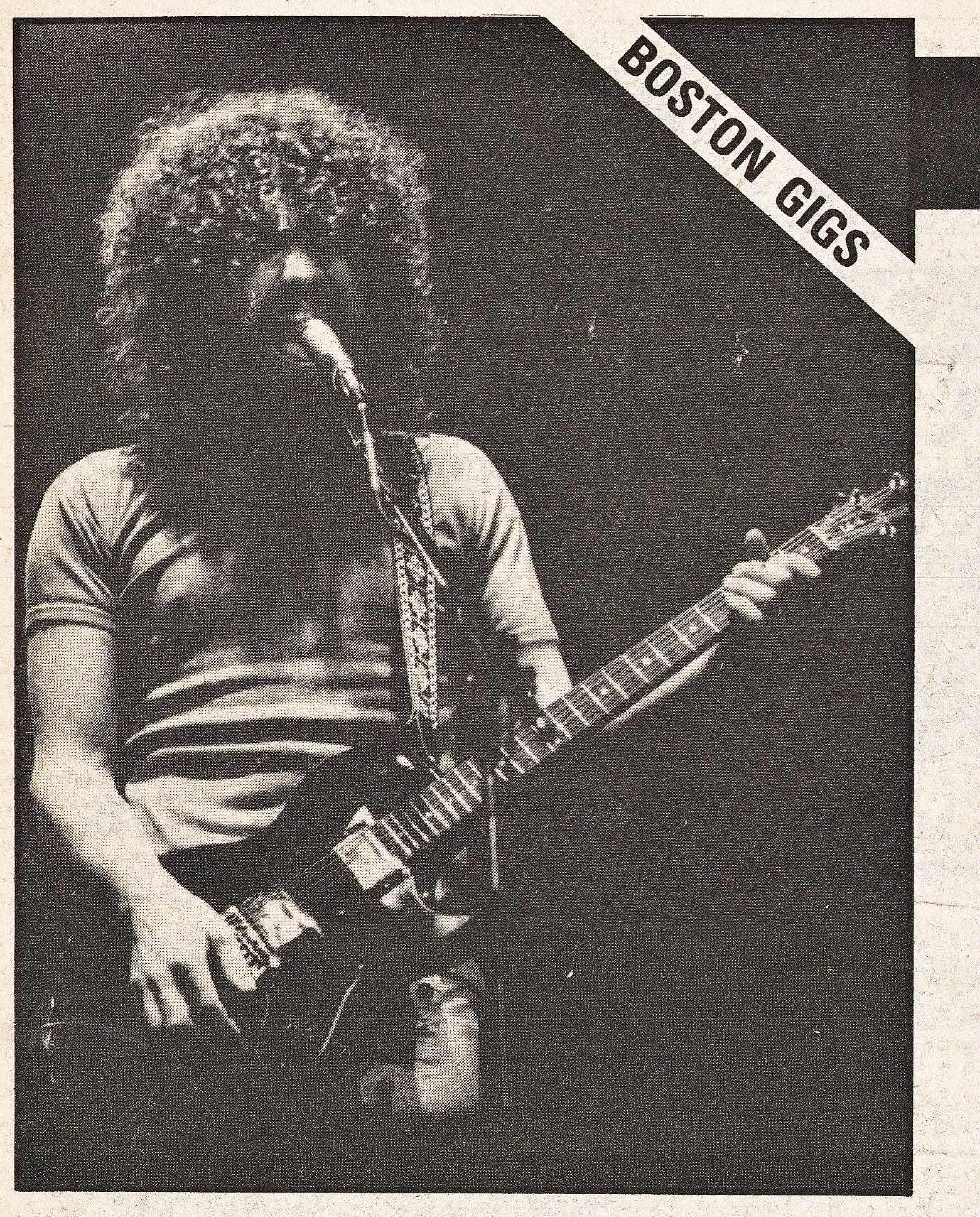
● ***LOU REED*** *flies in to play a couple of London concerts at the Hammersmith Odeon next Wednesday and Thursday (17-18), and these will be his only British dates on his current European tour.*

● ***LENE LOVICH*** *— with the success of 'Lucky Number' and 'Say When' already under her belt, and hoping to make it a hat-trick with her new single 'Bird Song' — opens her new tour at Sheffield (Friday), Loughborough (Saturday), Swansea (Sunday), Malvern (Monday) and Exeter (Tuesday). And the strong support bill features Jane Aire & The Belvederes and Dutch band The Meteors.*



STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

● ***THE TOURISTS,*** *fast developing into one of the most popular of the newer breed of bands (witness their show at the Reading Festival), kick off their latest jaunt around the country in Bradford on Wednesday.*



COMPILED BY DEREK JOHNSON

GIG GUIDE

Newbury The Globe: **Roy Harris/Tom Brown**
Newcastle University: **Judie Tzuke**
Northampton County Ground: **The Revillos**
Northampton Roadmenders Club: **The Sneaks/The Zeroes**
Norwich East Anglia University: **Nucleus**
Norwich Keswick Hall College: **The Next Band**
Nottingham Boat Club: **Bombshell**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Side Effect**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **UK Subs/Urge**
Nottingham University: **Slade/Def Leppard**
Oxford Corn Dolly: **Dogwatch**
Oxford Oranges & Lemons: **English Subtitles**
Pagham Church Farm: **Chas & Dave**
Preston Guildhall: **Darts**
Reading University: **Writz**
Retford Porterhouse: **The Inmates**
Sheffield City Hall: **Gillan/Randy California**
Sheffield University: **CLimax Blues Band**
Southend Minerva: **The Jets**
St. Austell New Cornish Riviera: **The Pirates/The Young Ones**
St. Austell Polgooth Inn: **The Fans**
Stirling West End Bar (lunchtime): **FK9**
Uttoxeter Marchington Village Hall: **Cyclone Eddie**
Walsall Civic Hall: **The Angelic Upstarts**
Walsall Pelsall Community Centre: **Harvey Andrews/Sally's Friends/Dandy**
Winchester Theatre Royal: **Adam West & His Gotham City Rockers**
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): **The Pests**
Wolverhampton Polytechnic: **Pasadena Roof Orchestra**

Sunday

Banbury Folk Club: **John Mackin**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Prima Donna**
Birmingham Shirley Red Lion: **The Crack**
Birmingham (Yardley) The Swan: **Video**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre (lunchtime): **Exit**
Blackpool Opera House: **Leo Sayer**
Bournemouth Village Bowl: **Fat Larry's Band/Slick**
Bradford Students Union: **Shadowfax**
Brighton Buccaneer: **Fan Club**
Bristol Plume of Feathers: **'A' Block**
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott & Ian Ellis**
Buxton Royal Forester: **June Tabor**
Canterbury Marlowe Theatre: **Pasadena Roof Orchestra**
Cardiff The Philharmonic: **The Screen Gems**
Cardiff Top Rank: **Stiff Little Fingers**
Corby Town Supporters Club: **Strange Days**
Croydon Fairfield Hall: **Dean Friedman**
Croydon Greyhound: **Flying Saucers**
Doncaster Romeo & Juliet: **Killermeters/The Lambrettas/The Name**
Edinburgh Harvey's Club: **Trax**
Edinburgh Usher Hall: **Hot Chocolate**
Exeter Polytechnic: **The Jags**
Fife St. Andrew's University: **Lindisfarne**
Guildford Royal Hotel: **The Boners**
Halifax Civic Hall: **Darts**
Hemel Hempstead Pavilion: **The Bears/Vince Pie & The Crumbs/The Communters**
Horsham Capitol Theatre: **Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames**
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: **The Sutherlands**
Jacksdale Grey Topper: **UK Subs/Urge**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Elkie Brooks**
Leeds Fforde Green Hotel: **Kevin Borich**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Windows**
Leeds Victoria Hotel (lunchtime): **Best Friends**
Leicester (Shearsby) Bath Hotel: **The Speedy Bears**
Liverpool Empire Theatre: **Camel**
London Battersea Nag's Head: **Jugular Vein**
London Camden Brecknock: **Steve Hooker Band**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Red Beans & Rice**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Little Stevie's Terminal Snack**
London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: **The Invisibles (for four days)**
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Small Hours**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **World Service**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Sad Among Strangers**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **The O.K. Band**
London Marquee Club: **Random Hold**
London Palladium: **Loudon Wainwright/Chas & Dave**
London Peckham Montpelier (lunchtime): **Blue Moon**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Boston**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Brian Lemon**
London Strand Lyceum Ballroom: **Herman Brood & His Wild Romance/Destroy All Monsters/The Physicals**
London Walthamstow Assembly Hall: **Kenny Ball Band**
Luton Cesar's Palace: **The Drifters (for a week)**
Luton The Unicorn: **Zilch**
Maidstone Royal Albion (lunchtime): **Cracked Mirror**
Manchester Golden Garter: **The Three Degrees (for a week)**
Middlesbrough Town Hall: **Mary O'Hara**
Newbridge Memorial Hall: **Writz**
Newbury Old Waggon & Horses: **Graham Thomas**
Newcastle City Hall: **Penetration**
Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
Nottingham Boulevard Hotel: **Liam O'Flynn & Paddy Glackin**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Mortals**
Oxford Corn Dolly: **Urchin**
Poole Wessex Hall: **The Merton Parkas**
Portsmouth Rotary Club: **Chinatown**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Martin Carter & Graham Jones**
Preston Guildhall: **The Boomtown Rats/Protex**
Redcar Coatham Bowl: **The Ruts/The Flys**
Sheffield Top Rank: **The Stranglers**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Sky**
Swansea Top Rank: **Lene Lovich/Jane Aire & The Belvederes/The Meteors**
Uxbridge Brunel University: **The Vapors**
Wallingford Corn Exchange: **Pete Castle**
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Weymouth Gloucester Hotel (lunchtime): **Scissor Fits**
Windsor Blazers: **Mary Wilson (for a week)**

Monday

Basildon Towngate Theatre: **Ian Carr's Nucleus**
Birkenhead Hamilton Club: **Def Leppard**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Freebird**
Birmingham Night Out: **The Four Tops (for five days)**
Birmingham Top Rank: **The Stranglers**
Boston Folk Club: **Robin Garside & Paul Gough**
Brighton Alhambra: **Airport**
Bristol Crockers: **The Fans (for three days)**
Bristol Hippodrome: **"Rocky Horror Show" (for a week)**
Bristol Romeo & Juliet: **The Merton Parkas**
Cleethorpes Bunny Club: **Slade**
Eastbourne Congress Theatre: **Elkie Brooks**
Edinburgh Tiffany's: **Gang Of Four/The Mekons**
Glasgow Apollo Theatre: **Hot Chocolate**
Harrow The Herga: **June Tabor/Martin Simpson**
High Wycombe Town Hall: **Destroy All Monsters**
Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
Leeds Heaven & Hell: **This Is It/The Gimmicks/Dance Chapter/Naked Voices**
Leicester Bailey's: **Kandidate (for a week)**
Liverpool Eric's: **Little Roosters/The Mods**
London Bermondsey Apples & Pears: **Stan's Blues Band**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Pretty British/Sta-Prest/Jack Thighs**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Squire/Romantix**
London Clapham 101 Club: **Splodgeness Abounds**
London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Isaac Guillory**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Ferdia**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Siouxsie & The Banshees/The Cure**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Pinpoint**
London Knightsbridge Pizza on the Park: **Fred Hunt**
London Marquee Club: **Brakes**
London N.4 The Stapleton: **The O.K. Band**
London Putney Half Moon: **Matt Mallory/Liam O'Flynn**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Boston**
London University College: **Bombshell**
London Victoria The Venue: **Dean Friedman**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Details**
Malvern Winter Gardens: **Lene Lovich/Jane Aire & The Belvederes/The Meteors**
Manchester The Factory: **Baron Hi-Fi**
Manchester University: **Last Call**
Newcastle City Hall: **Darts**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Party**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwaihir**
Plymouth Clones: **Tours**
Portsmouth Guildhall: **Sky**
Preston Guildhall: **Whitesnake**
Rayleigh Crocs: **Little Tony & The Tennessee Rebels**
Redcar Old Kent Road: **The Vye**
Rochdale The Tropical: **The Executives**
Southend Zero 6: **Musicians Workshop**
Staines Folk Club: **George Gritzbach**
St. Albans City Hall: **Gillan/Randy California**
Stockport Davenport Theatre: **Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames**
Stoke Trentham Gardens: **The Boomtown Rats/Protex**
Totnes Civic Hall: **The Jags**
Witney Folk Club: **Chris Leslie**
Wolverhampton Civic Hall: **The Undertones/ Killermeters**
York University: **Lindisfarne**

Tuesday

Ambleside Salutation Hotel: **June Tabor/Martin Simpson**
Birmingham Odeon: **Camel**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **The Business**
Blackburn King George's Hall: **The Undertones/ Killermeters**
Brentwood Hermit Club: **Harvey Andrews/Vishnic & White**
Bridlington Spa Pavilion: **Darts**
Brighton Alhambra: **Golinski Brothers/The Chefs**
Brighton Pavilion Theatre: **Second Nature**
Cleethorpes Bunny's Club: **Slade**
Dartford Folk Club: **George Gritzbach**
Derby College of Further Education: **Ian Carr's Nucleus**
Dundee Teasers Club: **The Starjets**
Exeter Routes: **Lene Lovich/Jane Aire & The Belvederes/The Meteors**
Glasgow Apollo Theatre: **Whitesnake**
Glasgow Strathclyde University: **After The Fire**
Gravesend (Northfleet) Red Lion: **The Monitors**
Huddersfield Polytechnic: **The Piranhas**
Ilkley Rose & Crown: **Side Effect**
Keele University: **Lindisfarne**
Leed Fan Club: **I.Q. Zero**
Leeds Polytechnic: **The Original Mirrors**
Leicester Granby Hall: **The Boomtown Rats/Protex**
Leicester University: **The Ruts/The Flys**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Vapours**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Cuddly Toys**
London Clapham 101 Club: **Craze**
London Fulham Cock Tavern: **John Spencer's Alternative**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The Flatbackers**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Destroy All Monsters**
London Marquee Club: **UK Subs/Urge**
London Old Kent Rd. Thomas A'Beckett: **Stan's Blues Band**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Boston**
London Tottenham-Court Rd. Dominion Theatre: **Sky**
London Wembley Conference Centre: **Chris Barber Band with Ottilie Patterson/Ronnie Scott Quartet/Morrissey-Mullen Band**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Bombshell/D-Notice**
London W.10 Acklam Hall: **The Astronauts/The Mob/Zounds/The Androids Of Mu**
London W.14 The Kensington: **The Trendies**
Manchester Polytechnic: **Stiff Little Fingers**
Margate Winter Gardens: **Mary O'Hara**
Newcastle City Hall: **Hot Chocolate**
Norwich Cromwells: **Punishment Of Luxury**
Nottingham Trent Polytechnic: **The Merton Parkas**
Portsmouth Polytechnic: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Scunthorpe Tiffany's: **Gillan/Randy California**
Sheffield Limit Club: **The Mekons**
Southport Theatre: **Gladys Knight & The Pips**
Swansea White Swan: **Graham Larkbey**
Swindon Brunel Rooms: **Sore Throat**

Wednesday

Aberdeen Music Hall: **The Starjets**
Ayr West Scotland College of Agriculture: **The Squibs**
Birmingham Bogarts: **The Distrainers**
Bournemouth Winter Gardens: **Elkie Brooks**
Bradford College Students Union: **The Misfits**
Bradford St. George's Hall: **The Undertones/ Killermeters**
Bradford University: **The Tourists**
Brighton Basement: **The Lambrettas**
Brighton Top Rank: **Stiff Little Fingers**
Bristol Stonehouse: **The Directors**
Cardiff Casablanca Club: **The Inmates**
Cardiff New Moon Club: **Zipper**
Carshalton St. Helier's Arms: **Flying Saucers**
Chatham Tam O'Shanter: **Cracked Mirror**
Cheltenham Plough Inn: **Roadsters**
Derby Assembly Rooms: **Leo Sayer**
Edinburgh Odeon: **Whitesnake**
Hereford Rotters Club: **The Beat**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **Red Beans & Rice**
Leeds Marquis of Granby: **The Gimmicks/Performance Anxiety**
Liverpool The Masonic: **The Accelerators**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Tribesman**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **The Flexible Dustbins**
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Bats/Car Crash**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Gaffa**
London Dalston Crown & Castle: **Liam O'Flynn & Paddy Glackin**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Sta-Prest**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Lou Reed**
London Lewisham Concert Hall: **Mary O'Hara**
London Marquee Club: **UK Subs/Urge**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Boston**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Joe Temperley/Brian Lemon Trio**
London Southall White Hart: **The Rockin' Shades**
London Tottenham-Court Rd. Dominion Theatre: **Sky**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Split Rivitt**
London Wembley Conference Centre: **Oscar Peterson/Ronnie Scott Quartet/Velvet**
London Wimbledon F.C. Nelson's Club: **Charlie Fawn**
London Woolwich Thames Polytechnic: **The Dodgems/The Chefs**
London Woolwich Tramshed: **Dogwatch**
Loughborough University: **Ian Carr's Nucleus**
Manchester Ashton Birch Hotel: **Units**
Manchester University: **Judie Tzuke**
Middlesbrough Town Hall: **Darts**
Newcastle People's Theatre: **George Gritzbach**
Nottingham University: **Punishment Of Luxury**
Oxford Corn Dolly: **Romantix**
Reading Target Club: **The Mods**
Reading University: **Pressure Shocks**
Scampton RAF Station: **The Kidda Band**
Sheffield City Hall: **The Boomtown Rats/Protex**
Sheffield Polytechnic: **The Sutherlands**
Shrewsbury Cascade Club: **The Jags**
Slough College: **Mike Absalom**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Camel**
Upminster New Windmill Hall: **Chas & Dave**
Wolverhampton Polytechnic: **Sore Throat/The Vye**

NEW YORK GIG GUIDE

MONDAY (15): My Father's Place — **Black Eagles**; Lone Star Cafe — **James Cotton** (two days); Squat — **Fred Frith** (two days); Bottom Line — **Robin Williamson.**

TUESDAY (16): Westbury — **Kingston Trio**; My Father's Place — **Sylvain Sylvain's Teenage News**; Village Vanguard — **Junior Mance** (seven days); Spectrum — **Jethro Tull/UK** (two days); Carnegie Hall — **The Chieftains**; Seventh Avenue South — **Vicki Sue Robinson** (two days).

WEDNESDAY (17): Showplace — **The Members/Tokyo Rose**; City Centre — **Ashford & Simpson** (four days); Westbury — **Teddy Prendergrass** (five days); Apollo — **Parliament/Funkadelic** (five days); Fast Lane — **Laughing Dogs**; My Father's Place — **MRQB.**

THURSDAY (18): Palladium — **Elton John & Ray Cooper** (eight days); Bottom Line — **Crystal Gayle**; Rockpile — **Herman's Hermits**; Nassa Coliseum — **Charlie Daniels** (two days).

FRIDAY (19): Diplomat — **John Cale/The Only Ones**; Bottom Line — **The Yachts (two days)**; **Max's Kansas City** — **John Otway** (two days); Hurrah — **Cherry Vanilla** (two days); Resorts International — **Gloria Gaynor** (two days); Public Theatre — **Jaki Byard**; My Father's Place — **Israel Vibration.**

SATURDAY (20): Great Gilder Sleeves — **The A's/Beacon/Ramsey Lewis/Donald Byrd**; Zappa's — **Billie Falcon-/Roy Loney**; Stone Poney — **White Tiger.**

SUNDAY (21): Capitol — **Hunter & Ronson/City Boy**; Sweet Basil — **Mike Longo** (two days).

HIGHLIGHTS

T.V. SMITH of The Adverts

● ***STIFF LITTLE FINGERS*** *are also making their presence felt around and about — this week's gigs being at Portsmouth (Thursday), Cambridge (Friday), Leicester (Saturday), Cardiff (Sunday), Manchester (Tuesday) and Brighton (Wednesday).*

● ***THE ADVERTS*** *have been conspicuous by their absence lately, but they're back in action again to aid promotion of their new album 'A Cast Of Thousands'. Their travels this week take them to Scotland — Edinburgh (Thursday) and Aberdeen (Friday).*

● ***BOSTON,*** *whose lead singer Brad Delp is seen in our picture above, are one of the hottest box-office properties in the States right now, and their first British tour has aroused considerable interest — with tickets at a premium. They begin their visit with five successive nights at London Rainbow, starting on Saturday.*

● ***GLADYS KNIGHT*** *& The Pips are always welcome visitors, and they're back again for what we believe to be their longest-ever UK tour. Playing two concerts nightly at most venues, they open at Newcastle (Friday), Glasgow (Saturday) and Southport (Tuesday).*

You'll find plenty of other worthwhile gigs in the day-by-day listings, such as London concerts by Madness (Friday) and The Selecter (Saturday). But please note that the Squeeze tour, originally scheduled to open on Sunday, has now been postponed until November — see News Desk for details. And do remember that Gig Guide entries can only be accepted by post — at the NME, 5-7 Carnaby Street, London W1V 1PG — to arrive not less than a week prior to publication date.

THE TOURISTS

THE LIVE PAGE

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Plus support & Mandy H

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+ Stan's Blues Band

Monday October 15th 60p
Mods Monday
SQUIRE
+ Romantix

Tuesday October 16th 50p
CUDDLY TOYS
+ Pretty British

Wednesday October 17th 50p
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Thursday October 18th 50p
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Randy California & Friends
+ Samson
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words words (Barry Clarke) words words words words words words

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Tues 16th Free
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Extra show by public demand

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Friday October 12th
SQUIRE + Back Numbers
Saturday October 13th
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+ The Almost Brothers
Tuesday October 16th
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Wednesday October 17th
TENPOLE TUDOR + Support
Thursday October 18th
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+ Black Superstition Mountain
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OUTLAW CONCERTS PRESENT
Gillan
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST FROM THE U.S.A.
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Tuesday October 23rd
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STRAIGHT MUSIC PRESENTS

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THE TEANBEATS

SQUIRE

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Dave Woods Presents

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14/16 Boston
14 Loudon Wainwright
14 Herman Brood
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17/19 Lou Reed
18/20 Sky
19 Ruts
20 The Cimarons
20 Steve Harley
21 Leo Kottke
22 Serge Lane
23/24 Darts
24 Gillan
25/27 Gladys Knight
26 Joy Division
27 Inmates + Lew Lewis Reformer
27 Southside Johnny
28 White Snake
30 Undertones
NOVEMBER
1 Stranglers
1/4 AC/DC
2 Skids
2 Revillos
3 Penetration
4 Moody Blues
4 Four Tops
5/6 Boomtown Rats
5/8 Blue Oyster Cult
6 Lene Lovich
9 Squeeze
9/10 Buzzcocks
10 Hot Chocolate
12 John McLaughlin
13 Robert Palmer
13/18 Manhattan Transfer
16 Gallagher & Lyle
17 Steve Hillage
21 Billie Jo Spears
25 Specials
26/27 Motorhead
DECEMBER
2 Hawkwind
2/4 The Jam
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14/15 Judas Priest

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23rd **ABERDEEN** *RUFFLES* ▼ 24th **GLASGOW** *TECHNICAL COLLEGE* ▼ 25th **EDINBURGH** *ASTORIA*
26th **DUNDEE** *TECHNICAL COLLEGE* ▼ 29th **BIRKENHEAD** *HAMILTON CLUB* ▼ 31st **SCARBOROUGH** *PENTHOUSE*
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Attack UK

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COWBELL PRESENTS

SHAM 69

+
SUPPORT

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18th OCTOBER

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19th OCTOBER

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22nd OCTOBER

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23rd OCTOBER

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Polytechnic of Central London S.U.
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+ The Resistance

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JANE AIRE AND THE BELVEDERES
THE METEORS

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THE MOODY BLUES

LIVE IN CONCERT
AT THE

BINGLEY HALL
STAFFORD

Due to unprecedented demand extra show

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7.30 pm

Fully seated Concert Hall
All seats bookable

Tickets £6 £5 £4

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ADVERTISEMENTS
ON PAGE 73

STRAIGHT MUSIC PRESENTS

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ELECTRIC BALLROOM
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SATURDAY 13th OCTOBER at 7·30

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Rainbow THEATRE

OUTLAW CONCERTS
PRESENT

THE UNDERTONES

TUESDAY
30th OCTOBER
7·30pm

THE SKIDS

FRIDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 7·30pm
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STEVE HACKETT

in concert

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23rd October
APOLLO, MANCHESTER
24th October
VICTORIA HALL, STOKE
25th October
CITY HALL, NEWCASTLE
26th October
TOWN HALL, MIDDLESBOROUGH
28th October
ST. GEORGES HALL, BRADFORD
30th October
ODEON, BIRMINGHAM
31st October
COLSTON HALL, BRISTOL
1st November
GAUMONT, IPSWICH
3rd November
ODEON, CHELMSFORD
4th November
ASSEMBLY ROOMS, DERBY
5th November

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With Guests
THE JAGS
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SUNDAY 4th NOVEMBER
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DOORS OPEN 7 p.m.

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Approach Road, NEW BARNET
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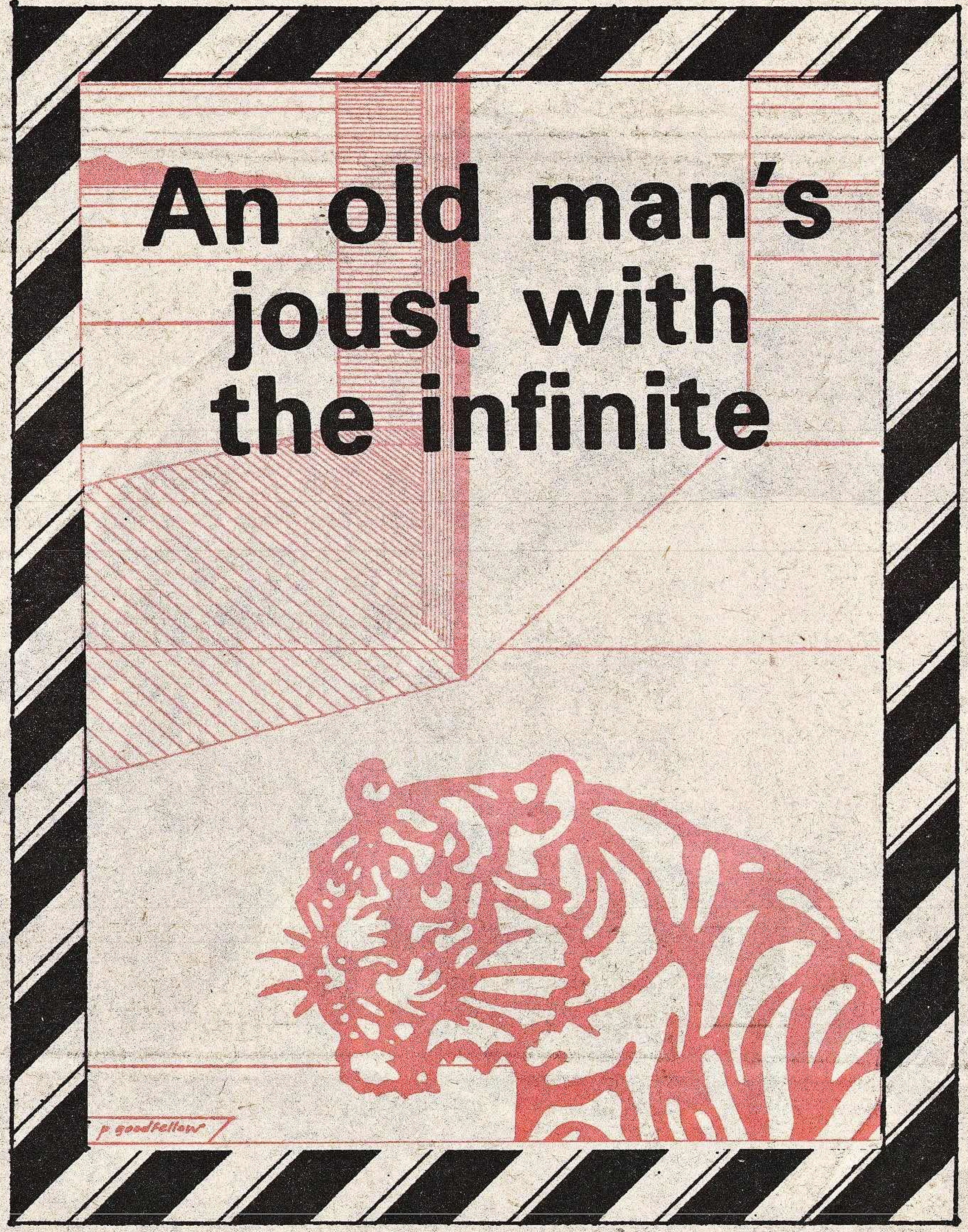
Thursday October 11th
LIP SERVICE
Friday October 12th
SKINDEEP
Saturday October 13th
MIRRORS
Sunday October 14th
THIRSTY WORK
Tuesday October 15th
DAVID BLOSSE BAND

PRINT



An old man's joust with the infinite

THE BOOK OF SAND
By Jorge Luis Borges
(Penguin £1.50)

"I REALISE I am getting on in years. An unmistakable symptom of this is the fact that novelties — maybe because I feel they hold nothing essentially new and are really no more than timid variations — neither interest nor distract me."

Thus speaks Alejandro Ferri, narrator of 'The Congress", longest of the stories in *The Book Of Sand* — although the statement is undoubtedly intended to be taken as an autobiographical nudge by the octogenarian Borges, and an honest one at that, as the stories collected herein bear out. Neither these, nor those in *Sand's* predecessor, *Doctor Brodie's Report,* have anything like the verve and vitality of the earlier pieces of *Fictions* or *The Aleph;* rather, the tone is that of an antiquarian bookshop, drily academic and dusty, with the blind and jaded Argentinian crafting re-treads of his fictional obsessions.

Later in 'The Congress' (a somewhat lucklustre example of the usual Borges secret-society story, as is 'The Sect Of The Thirty', also included here), Ferri makes reference to "the library's new director" — a post Borges once held — as ". . . a literary man who dedicates himself to the study of ancient languages . . . and to the demagogic exaltation of an imaginary Buenos Aires of knife fighters."

This, surely, is Borges. But the joke, though definitely Borgesian, is poor and faintly gratuitious, with none of the subtelty and resonance one expects of him. Like seeing the old Charlie Chaplin doing the little tramp's walk . . .

Recognitions of old themes resound through many of the stories. 'The Book Of Sand' itself, for instance, is Borges' latest joust with the infinite (as in 'The Library Of Babel' and others), this time dealing with an infinitely-paged book the ownership of which is as unpleasant and fraught a state of affairs as that experienced by the infinitely-memoried protagonist of 'Funes The Memorious'. 'Avelino Arredondo', the story of an assassin's preparations, is a first cousin to 'Theme Of The Traitor And The Hero' (on which, incidentally, Bertolucci based the film *The Spider's Stratagem).*

'The Other', which opens the book, is a particularly revealing variation on another favourite theme, that of the *doppelganger* or alter-ego, which surfaces in many of the poems and in prose-pieces like 'Borges & I'.

The most engaging of the stories in *The Book Of Sand* is 'The Night Of The Gifts', an account of an old man's memory of a night when he "knew both love and death". In its universality, its mingled undertones of philosophy and violence, its circularity of construction and its meta-fictional implications, this is Borges at his best.

As usual, Borges places several screens between himself, the fiction and the reader, blurring (and thereby highlighting) the borders separating the real from the fictive.

Starting with the account of a discussion of Platonic archetypes, he leads us into an old man's account of a boyhood trip to a brothel, and thence to a whore's account of an Indian raid, which fanfares the arrival at the brothel of the outlaw Juan Moreira, who is killed shortly afterwards. The layers of the story are peeled back to reveal its essence, which is in the old man's postscript, a disclaimer with implications not only for Borges but for all writers and readers.

Also included in *The Book Of Sand* is a selection of Borges' later poems, collected under the title *The Gold Of The Tigers.*

These are disappointing, as is most of his poetry, for the simple reason that he is not primarily a poet. Borges deals with ideas, not with words; as his stripped-down synoptic stories attest, and it is to this he should stick.

The Book Of Sands would be far better minus the poems, at half the price.

As it is, Borges addicts will doubtless buy it anyway, but for those who aren't yet hooked (and you're missing something, believe me), the earlier *Labyrinths* collection (also in Penguin), at less than a quid, makes a far better introduction.

Andy Gill

THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE ROCK ALBUM COVER
By Angie Errigo
(Octopus £3.95)

TAKING no risks, breaking no ground, Angie Errigo foists sufficient analytical pretension onto a crassly collated file of age-old album covers to haul it onto the coffee tables of the liberal late-20s. It has the word 'Christmas' writ upon it in large and unsightly letters.

Errigo bases her text on the inflated premise that rock covers have created a progressive art form in themselves — as opposed to serving as a window-display for various exsiting styles. Despite the frequently turgid overviews to her chosen categories (Album Gallery, Images For Sale, sex, etc), her reference to the changing social and political climate is suitably nostalgic but never gets beneath the most stifling superficiality.

Worse still, her dividing line between 'art' and 'marketing' gets hopelessly confused. With her views mostly restricted to a channelled artistic progression, she very rarely takes the more valid stance that covers are a means of gauging the pretensions and aspirations of a wholly commercial and self-deceptive business.

Four quid buys you jumbled reprints of virtually every well-known cover in the last ten years, ending with a simplistic and cursory glance of one of the most significant revivals in rock marketing — the New Wave. All the most interesting aspects —such as banned or controversial covers, alternative cover shots from photo sessions, rare but important or specific themes (nouveau, deco, surreal, dayglo/psychedelic, etc), or of one influential design force — are either given a very loose footing or none at all.

The subject awaits definitive treatment.

Mark Ellen

THE NEW PORTABLE SOUND STUDIO

This Philips N2233 automatic recorder looks simple enough.

Simple to operate yes, but there's a lot more to the Philips N2233 than its smart looks let on.

It's much more like a portable sound studio.

Of course it records cassettes like ordinary recorders. And the quality is a lot more than you'd expect from something so small.

The Philips N2233 has a cue and revue capability too.

This enables you to put together your own selection of music. It also lets you play back material the moment you have recorded it. Watch out Kid Jensen!

You'll agree that such a sophisticated piece of equipment as the Philips N2233 shouldn't be called simply a cassette recorder.

The portable sound studio is much more flattering.

PHILIPS

Simply years ahead.

PHILIPS

Recording and playback of material may require consent – see Copyright Act 1956 and the Performer's Protection Act 1958–1972.

2
TONE
TOUR
OCT. 19 BRIGHTON Top Rank
20 SWINDON Oasis
21 BOURNEMOUTH Stateside Center
22 EXETER University
23 PLYMOUTH Fiesta
26 NORWICH University of East Anglia
27 HATFIELD Poly
28 WOLVERHAMPTON Civic Hall
29 BIRMINGHAM Top Rank
OCT. 31 HANLEY Victoria Hall
NOV. 1 BLACKBURN Golden Palms
2 LANCASHIRE University
4 SHEFFIELD Top Rank
5 LEICESTER De Montfort Hall
6 PORTSMOUTH Guild Hall
7 CARDIFF Top Rank
8 DERBY Kings Hall
9 NEWCASTLE (Venue to be confirmed)
NOV. 10 STIRLING University
11 GLASGOW (Venue to be confirmed)
12 EDINBURGH Tiffanys
13 ABERDEEN Ruffles
14 AYR Pavilion
15 CARLISLE Market Hall
16 LEEDS University
17 LOUGHBOROUGH University
NOV. 18 BRISTOL Locarno
21 LIVERPOOL Mountford Hall
22 DUBLIN Olympic Ballroom*
23 BELFAST University*
25 LONDON Lyceum
26 HEMEL HEMSTEAD Pavilion
28 CLEETHORPES Winter Gardens
29 COVENTRY Tiffanys
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SPECIALS
MADNESS
THE
SELECTER
DEXY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS
*Specials & Dr. Feelgood only (Not part of Two Tone Tour)
From 15 Nov. onwards Dexy's Midnight Runners will replace Madness.

LIVE!

Dead meat in different abattoirs

Buzzcocks

Liverpool

I thought of Buzzcocks as the vanguard of the Hygena Q-Age: the matt sheen of that first album, the fuzzy claustrophobic delicacy of 'What Do I Get' — it was all glinting, abrasive music and packaging.

Gradually the fiction evaporated and all that was left was the romance: a stream of singles with hooks straight from the abattoir wherein lurked the lyrics of Pete Shelley's persona as the Bryan Ferry of *Coronation Street*.

They were anthems live, though. The tight-wristed hatchet-riffing of 'Pulsebeat' or '16' made you dance or you took your dead arse home. Tonight, there was gobbing, disintegrating drumkits and two patented atrocities from Steve Diggle.

Buzzcocks dress-sense has reached newsreader level, Peter Shelley looking like John Noakes and only Steve Garvey having made an effort at sharpness with a mauve waist-coat. They lurch into 'I Don't Mind', 1978's Marketing Ploy and the only occasion when Buzzcocks insulted the audience / public's intelligence.

The first half of the set consists of earlier material, such as 'Pulsebeat' and 'Autonomy' and the band play a noise, staring down at the monitors as though they're watching the Old Grey Will and Testament. Shelley's genuine rapport with the audience is severely threatened when he asks us to "sing along with Steve" on 'Autonomy'. The boredom with which they play the old material is nauseating.

Blatant apathy and sloppy disinterest wasn't what I'd expected. The dancing stopped, people started to walk out; first night sound problems and some downright awful material didn't help a great deal.

'Mad Mad Judy' was worthy of The Knack, with its dodgem car precision, and 'A Different Kind Of Tension' saw Shelley rubbing a benign, smug shoulder with Ian Dury, another music with a different lecture: *"Be Good/ Be evil/ Be wise/ Be foolish'*. Reasons to be feeble, Pt 3.

The only pop material played was 'Ever Fallen In Love', 'Noise Annoys' and 'Everybody's Happy Nowadays', the latter of which stood out as a razor sharp display of dynamics, despite its modern world Vera Lynn lyrics. 'You Say You Don't Love Me' is the new single and it'll go through your head like a lathe. This is the essence of Buzzcocks.

Like Chic or James Brown, Buzzcocks can nail down a riff that builds on itself, and they leave it ringing in your ears at the end of the set. On their last visit to Liverpool, they closed with the hypnotic, spiralling 'ESP' and it worked superbly, with Steve Diggle left alone on stage picking the flesh off the song. They tried the same thing this time with the seven minute 'I Believe' ending with Pete Shelley shouting *"There is/No love/In this/World any/More"*. After a minute of this, a damp cloth wrapped itself round his head.

The song is a cross between Christopher Robin and a manifesto, saved by an aching, soaring chorus, but it was reduced to a travesty by the lone minstrel theatrics of its closing moments.

They were called back for 'Boredom', three years old and played out of duty — no rage, no wit, just a cocked head and a vacant, faraway sneer. The hall exploded. Garvey spat at the front row and it rained snot.

Buzzcocks now play with their audience in a patronising display of handholding and head-patting. It looks like charm but it's contrived and static.

Bring on the New Rage Steppers.

Kevin Fitzgerald

Shelley in the slaughterhouse. Pic Kevin Cummins.

The Stranglers

Belfast

Last year Jean Jacques Burnel apparently wanted to stand on my head because my brain stunk; he didn't like my own particular perspective on The Stranglers.

Tonight Hugh Cornwell is less than impressed by the 'humanity' of a guy who has stolen his leather jacket. There's a doomy silence as the band waits for the garment to be returned. Then feet start to stamp, hollers echo through the hall and there's a sicko psychotic vein bulging urge for blood to be spilt.

Now we can have fun.

Now we can all be men together and carol for The Stranglers to bring on the nubiles.

Ludicrous machismo is not afraid to look violence straight in the eye (the highlight of The Stranglers' last Irish tour was when JJ leapt off the stage to punch shit out of a gobber), but it still stinks and personally I don't care a damn about your violence metaphor/reality collision *because the performer has a certain degree of responsibility* to his audience, and this pandering to sub-conscious sadism is not how it should be used.

The Stranglers' new set is dourly uncommercial with most of the singles dropped. Fortunately they still have the decency to include their best twilight dream, 'Hanging Around'; steamy and smoky with dark glares from the corners and leather taut around the shoulders.

Signs come thick and fast: a huge, pseudo-symbolic 'Raven' backdrop, the gallactic gothic imagery. In any case they bore on and on — just a modern heavy metal band like all the rest.

For the most part it's the same old bottle with the same old contents, but the piano man doesn't half give it some zip.

Working like a demented lab-technician Dave Greenfield's playing stuns and shines. There are skirmishes, jeering and jarring all over the place; so why are the rest of them plodding through the mundane terrain of voluble bass and rugged rhythms. Greenfield gives delights a plenty, but the staid and sturdy reactionary music machine of The Stranglers doesn't go with him.

There's an hour of it in all. 'Down In The Sewer' with a few wrong notes (surprisingly no dead carcasses are hauled onstage); no 'Peaches' ("You'll have to go down to the Greengrocers," they quip). They give the usual futile tirade to stop all of your gobbing. There are also a lot of songs I didn't know then and have no particular wish to know now.

Good moments? Well, when some pullovers are flung onstage we're assured that they'll be given to some poor kids; there was also 'Hanging Around' and 'Duchess', which is quite pleasant background music for paring your nails.

Not that I think it's of the slightest importance to either them or myself, but this critic's masterplan for Stranglers' self-fulfilment is that . . . Dave Greenfield should get his own band together even if only to tell everyone that Ray Manzarek's train left the station a long time ago; Hugh should forget about the whole slimy business abd become a full-time Trotskyite; JJ could open a karate school in Katmandu and Jet could get his ice-cream van back on the road.

I think the Stranglers are criminally vulgar, violent and varacious, and I often wonder how they get away with it. For supposedly intelligent guys, the lyrics are unbelievably duff with their own stifling structures and semantics. The tendency is to inwardly retreat rather than to outwardly progress from this framework.

To hell with political idealism, *musically* The Stranglers have become everything the movement of which they were once part was a reaction against. It is a rotting corpse which should have been buried when it began to smell halfway through the first album, because it now stinks to high heavens. Still I sincerely hope they find a good home for those pullovers.

Gavin Martin

Corpses hanging around. Pix Pennie Smith.

The Books

Moonlight Club

Hello and welcome to The Moonlight Club, aka The Zodiac Club, aka The Railway Hotel, aka Klooks Kleek, but rest assured you're not the first to arrive. For such an unknown group The Books can sure pull 'em in.

Now this place is quite spacious as cupboards go, but right now the crush is such that you can't so much as shift position without causing a disturbance for five yards around. I tried fumbling for my notebook but gave up after getting hostile glares from the girl on my right and an odd sort smile from the bloke on the left.

With *lebensraum* at a premium, visibility is at a minimum for all of us under seven foot six, so my impressions of the band's reputedly impressive stage antics got pretty well restricted to the occasional glimpse. I think I heard five Books, but only saw four — and strictly limited to one at a time.

Lots of lovely pound notes for someone, I suppose, but not the best conditions for checking out what promises to be a highly important band, and sooner instead of later.

Still, I just about gathered that The Books are a unique proposition, an intense blend of humour and technology. They're a futuristic noise, sophisticated and strange, disciplined yet humane, very precise. And they're given to dressing up in ridiculous costumes.

Theirs is a very electronic and angular sound, keyboard and synthesizer dominated, sometimes jerky but always compelling. Singer Steven Betts has a dazzling line in mime-theatrics, coupled with a cultured stage-manner which suggests "intellectual" even before you find from a glance at *Time Out* that he's performing a trilogy of numbers inspired by Gunter Grass.

Visually, Betts finds his foil in urbane bassist Bob Kelly, an interesting character about whom I'm not sure what to say.

Cursedly, I was unable to stay for all the set, and given all the circumstances, this can't be much more than a preliminary report. But I know I'll be going back for more. See you there.

Take a leaf out of The Books, you just can't put them down etc. . .

Paul Du Noyer

Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes

The Venue

I guess it's both the strength and the charm of Southside Johnny and his football-team-sized outfit The Asbury Jukes that they come across so hopelessly unwieldy — eleven independent spirits, seemingly linked more by inspiration than discipline, all headed for the same destination but finding different ways of getting there.

The results, so far from big-band blandness or auto-funk slickness, are glorious.

Of course, lifeless perfection just isn't on the cards for any team headed by Southside, a shambling and devoutly chaotic frontman with a dirty roar of a voice, all wisecracks and liquor and doubtless a lot of the best R 'n' B this place has heard in a long time.

Kicking off with 'All I Want Is Everything', as neat a statement of intent as you could wish, and the fat, rich sound of 'Your Reply', the New Jersey juggernaut's no sooner under way than it's ground to an ignominious halt, fouled up by a power-failure afflicting selected Jukes — an embarrassment which they proceed to transform into a carnival, complete with impromptu vaudeville recitations from the five-man horn section and plenty of well-lubricated abuse from the groundlings, all of it amply repaid in kind by Johnny.

Finally the band is back, whole and intact, and open for business like they've never been away, through 'Take It Inside' to 'I'm So Anxious' — the latter number being claimed above the din as "number one in America and Poland, selling 14 million copies last week and making us all independently wealthy. We don't have to come over here for this abuse."

And so on through the set, slapstick between blasts of hot, solid power, like the epic Southside/Springsteen/Miami Steve Van Zandt collaboration 'Trapped Again', the thick and staggering 'Vertigo' and the irresistible blues of 'The Fever'.

From after 'I Don't Want To Go Home' — a choice example of the Jukes' brand of noise, displaying something like Graham Parker's kind of roughness plus assurance — we're into pure party time, from Sam Cooke's 'Bring It On Home To Me' to Chuck Berry's 'Run Rudolf Run' and 'Back In The USA' (cutely re-written as 'Back In The UK') via a beautiful piece of greasy falsetto doo-wop from the trombone-player.

It was crazy and it was timeless, the kind of a night that nobody wanted to stop. The best kind.

Paul Du Noyer

Wisecracks and liquor and slapstick Johnny

Southside. Pic Simon Fowler.

Modern Eon Activity Minimal

Liverpool

Welcome to the showroom, dummies. Liverpool's showcase album 'Street To Street' is now in the hippest racks this side of Rough Tirade, so anyone who missed out on Punk, Manchester or Leeds can wrap their toothless gums around Scouseland '79.

It clicks together neatly like rigor mortis at a necrophiliac's orgy. The beached whales Beatles' fans can now remain smug, neutered and totally irrelevant while fawning over the Zoo label — whose only crime has been to release intelligent, sharp records in the hallowed territory of The Cavern — and acknowledging the hair-shirt 'pop' tedium of the Premier League Independents.

It's not pop music at all. It's old, shrivelled beatniks with their Khmer Rouge Re-Education Camp Muzak howling away valuable airtime (when that matron Auntie Beeb allows it, of course). Their records are lovingly reared? Bullshit.

The 'Street' album is on Open Eye Records; an ironic title because all but two of the bands on the record induce an Eyelids In An Ongoing Jammed Shut Situation.

The Bunnymen are one. Modern Eon are the other.

Modern Eon's own tasty brand of sacred cow-punting is represented by 'Benched Down/'70s '60s', but since it was recorded they've lost their original drummer and tonight limp through a set that's upholstered by fuzzzion jamming and extraneous, sloppy Keefchords. Songs such as 'Child's Play' and 'Second Still' lost their punchiness and wandered stoned as a hippie into the garlanded realms of boredom. With Alex Johnson's lyrics reduced to phonetics, the five song set sagged miserably.

But having borrowed a drummer and with guitarist Ged Allen admitting they were under-rehearsed, I know — having seen them on better nights — that they can stampede over most opposition currently waddling around the chic, clique club circuit . . .

Enter Activity Minimal.

They contribute 'Television Game' to the LP and are worthless to the extent that their glum physics lecture bawlings get the bearded slobs and their 'aware' slobettes idiot-dancing. This band appeal to the festering hordes from the post-graduate Tim Leary spermspeak campus. They represent a nadir, willingly patronised by the far-out crypto-pensioners who kept music dead for so long. And they love it.

It makes me sick to watch ugly, oblivious old fools doing the Fester Fester Shake, because it means that we've come full circle and bands are catering to the oafs that it was *fashionable* to regard with contempt. It wasn't fashion, it was necessity.

So now we're back to Pure Destruction. It's what's happening to youth music, and it's what needs to be done to the insulting dreck that Activity Minimal, Secret Affair, The Ruts/Upstarts and the whole Reticient Rockers brigade are shitting at us through telescopic sights.

Kevin Fitzgerald

999

Marquee

999 have returned fresh from an apparently triumphant tour of The States. Five nights at

Roy Harper

St Paul's Church

Busker to brained street poet; rock festival fixture to prophet of doom. Where to now, Roy Harper?

Not much further, on the strength of this performance.

Billed with typical cynicism as 'Back To Reality', this, his first performance for over a year, was a shambolic conclusion to the Hammersmith and Fulham Festival Of Poetry With Music.

Dressed entirely in satanic black, this was Harper in his

Fred went for the interview with a new suit, a great set of references, a winning smile...

and bad breath.

Sorry Fred.

He should have remembered Double Amplex.

Available from Chemists throughout the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland.

The Marquee is their welcome home reception and when Nick Cash tells us "it's better than The Hammersmith Odeon" you just know he's got a point.

They blaze into 'Quite Diss', bore holes through it and into 'Let's Face It' as if their absence has sharpened their teeth for the meat of the UK circuit. Minutes pass in what seems seconds and Guy Day's guitar collides with John Watson's bass like haywire dodgem cars; the resulting noise is blurred, jagged and overlaps into a spiralling, unchannelled frenzy that rushes to the heart and upturns all expectations.

Time to wipe the sweat off your brow and pull in for an arm-pit stop (check the deodorant).

Cash's voice, often irritatingly grating on record, sheds its rasping penetration. His scowls and lurches are redolent of punk's dear Father Figure, but are nevertheless the right piercing point for 999's projectile.

Something funny happens here. The atmosphere crashed back to '77 and its delirium is widened by the swarms of gob (still, and forever, disgusting) that sail onstage and cause Cash to rebuke his perfect audience. Watson, head shaven and menacing, smiles luridly and pumps an arm stagefront and the gesture is immediately reciprocated in force. Stage-left, Day radiates a studied, oh-so-bored disinterest while Cash counts in "1-2-3!" Another time, another 999 song.

They drift towards a punk caricature that their early, purposeful development warned against and suggested they'd leave behind. They painstakingly try to define themselves in looks and actions and the convergence-point is their music. Hence flash and thrash mixes with over-literal interpretations that nevertheless forge an identity that's manageable but ultimately restrictive.

They've progressed to a stage that totally accommodates their image and they remain poised for America. This running-on-the-spot has also retained their home fans who've had no reason to displace allegiance.

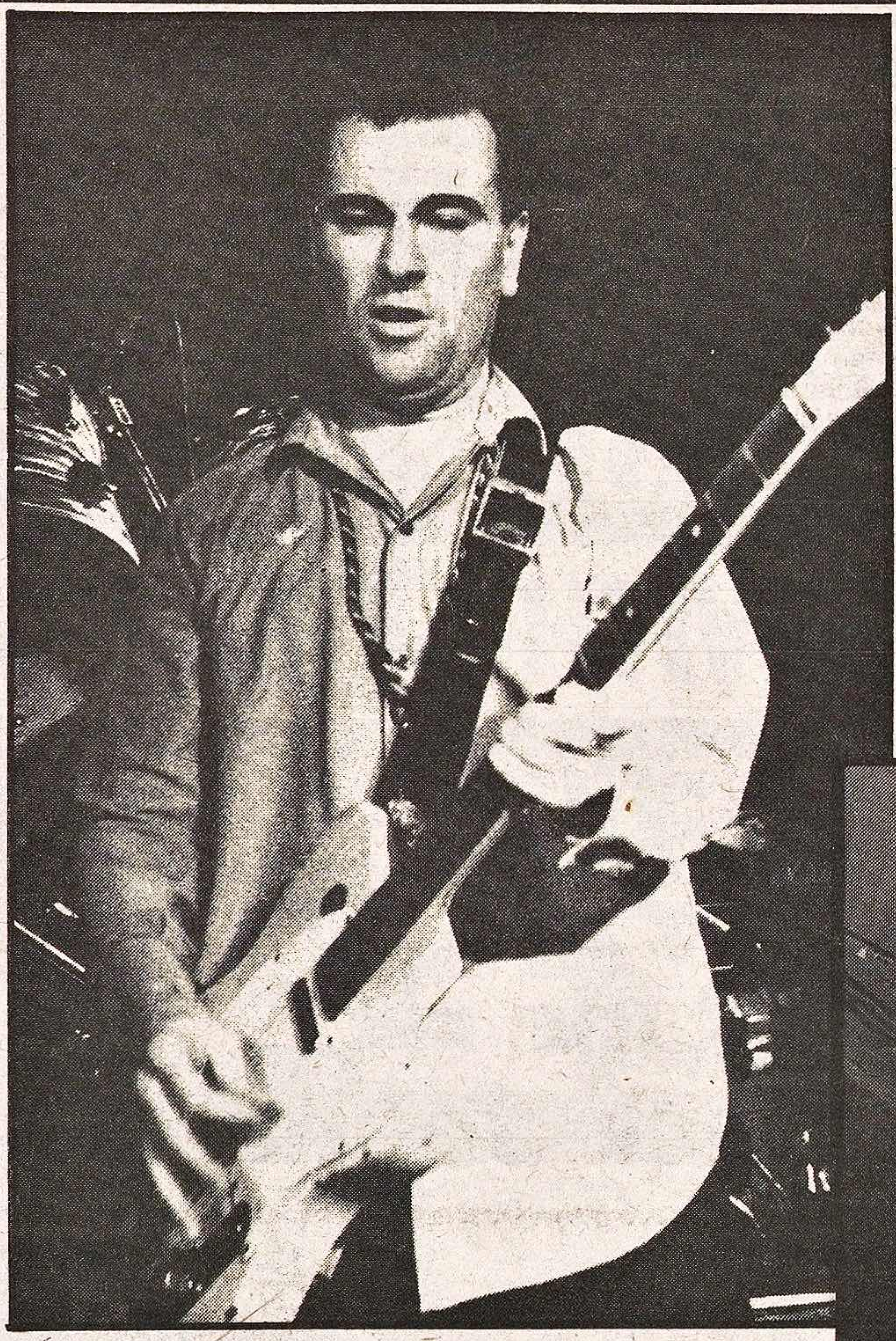
'No Pity' thrusts, excites and charges down a dark plughole scattering debris as it goes and from then on short-lived memories are pricked by the tumbling panic of 'Emergency', the riveted melodrama of 'Homicide' and 'Nasty Nasty' which they wave round their heads till it's frayed and tattered. Real rock 'n' roll wreckage, I guess.

The fearsome energy level is maintained for two encores and then abruptly switched off, leaving the audience quietly twitching.

Their set was as blinding as any I've seen and to recall it necessitated slow-motion doublethink, mental crossed-wires and worse. Often they were exhilarating to an extent which embarrasses and degrades their recorded output thus far.

After all, there must be 999 ways to devastate the US.

Pete Archer



Nick Cash. Pic David Corio.

Punk's dear father figure

Sylvain. Pic Joe Stevens.

Sylvain Sylvain

New York

Former New York Doll Sylvain Sylvain has dug into his rock and roll roots and come up with the true dirt.

Teenage News are a very trad rock band; hard driving, rhythm guitar permanently set on overdrive, lead guitar that stings, piano that bops and sax that wails. The piano and sax impart a classic '50s feel, but the sense of timing is fast and modern.

It's all there, done up right with all the time honoured virtues. A lean tough band that rocks it and socks it.

Syl is up front, singing and playing rhythm guitar, working up to a fever pitch and vibrating like he was being electrified. The rest of the band stay fairly stationary, and look a bit drab. They could certainly use a bit more visual colour.

Syl's written some good tunes: 'The Kids Are Back' is a dance-hall classic, tough pop music with a sharp hook that the band swing through with real exuberance; 'Every Boy Every Girl' is another in the same mould, fast dance music with ringing chords and a back beat you can't lose it.

'Fourteenth Street' gets down into the R'n'B roots with insinuating observations on the big-beat hepster scene, full of sly funky knowing. 'Got No Home' is a fast-paced blues sparked by sax and piano solos. Lead guitarist Johnny Rao plays with more restraint than he did as a David Johansen side-man, and his solos are now less arrogant, more thoughtful and resonant.

For 'Without You', a slow tear jerker, Syl puts down his guitar and concentrates on his singing to show he has a good mid-range voice. He adds some cute, country and western inflections, a bit like Tom Petty but with more guts.

Beatles' covers can be dangerous traps, but their run-through of 'I Feel Fine' comes off rollicking and fun. The set closer, 'Deeper' is a blues that cops a few lines too many from 'Heart Of Stone', but the encore 'That's Barbara' has them going out right and tight with a rocking jittering number that's both speedy and stylish.

This is the best vehicle Syl's had since leaving the Dolls. They have the directness and energy The Criminals sought, as well as an increased range of feeling and colour provided by the sax and piano. They're proficient but not overly slick.

When Chuck Berry said *"tell Tchaikovsky the news"*, it was something like Teenage News he had in mind.

Richard Grabel

element, plainly delighted to park his sacrilegious soap-box in such hallowed surroundings. Unable to contain his gross delusions of grandeur, he gave us endless crass sermons stuffed with outmoded symbolism, and tirades of time-warped esperanto, all of it dredged up from the stupifying pits of his own pessimism.

After the mild-mannered Andy Roberts opened with some ropey C&W, Roy joined him for a couple of dirge-like love songs that were near-enough lost in the church's cavernous echo.

But the music was short-lived. It was a 'poetry' gig.

Poets write poetry: Harper writes lyrics. Poets usually deliver with a semblance of drama; Harper spouted the likes of 'The Invaders' and 'The Institute' in a flat, mumbled monotone, after intros that explain each tedious, insignificant detail in case any of its earth-shattering importance was lost on us, his bird-brained disciples. Poets tend to use gestures to expand their words; Harper merely pointed a contemptuous finger skywards to remind us he'd got a reservation elswhere, the devil.

"People like music because it's more physical and more demonstrative," he told the hecklers, "but I *do* like the spoken word."

Seen, Roy. What price megalomania?

Mark Ellen

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The Inmates

Hope And Anchor

There was no room to stand in the Hope's sweaty crypt; no air to breathe, steam fogged up beer glasses and the alcohol level in the collective bloodstream could've sent up a hot-air balloon.

The Inmates are at it again with 100 per cent unadulterated R'n'B. And what sets them apart from the legions of proficient dime-a-dozen Feelgoods copyists is their obvious dedication and the evil billy-goat bray of Bill Hurley. When he cups his hands round the mike and curls his lip round a lyric, he knows that he sounds great — the right side of nasty.

Too young to remember the original Animals, I can only assume that The Inmates' stage-act — raw, dirty and a little sloppy — is how theirs must have been. But Hurley is no-man's Burdon, moulding 'Don't Lie To Me' and 'Ain't Got You' into his own style.

It's only on the third number 'The Walk' that the set perked up. Studded with handclaps and a neat hook, it struts up and down and reduces all the girls to bundles of quivering goose-flesh.

'Danger Zone' (the B-side of the wonderful single and set-closer 'Dirty Water') is totally unmemorable, probably as it comes next to and is overshadowed by guitarist Pete's glorious soul-wallowing hip-grinder, 'If Time Could Turn Backwards'. There isn't a dry glass in the house.

Sure, it's all textbook blues but The Inmates play like they just invented it, even when they Wilson Pickett-pocket 'Three Times Loser' or go back to blues basics with 'I Can't Stop (Loving You)'. It's great to see a handsome mod, looking like he just escaped from Madness, do the Frankenstein two-step and prove that you can live in the present and still dig the prehistoric sounds of R'n'B.

The set is a bit too long — not that the fans complained; two encores are clearly not enough — and the boys are all too happy to play, taking the opportunity to break in their new drummer Jim.

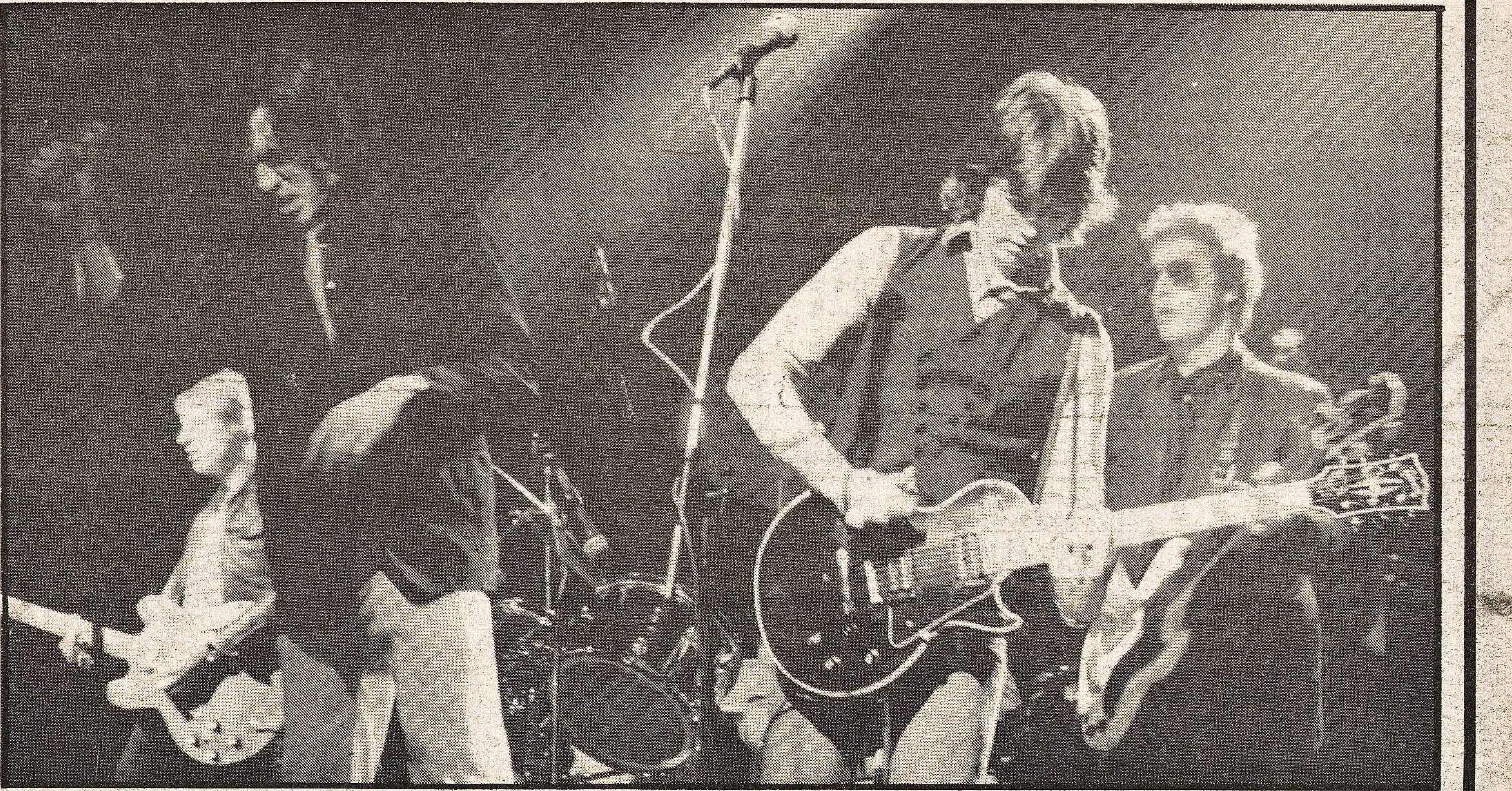
But take The Inmates out of their natural habitat (the boozer) and the whole experience will go flat. They need three vital ingredients — booze, sweat and cheers — to be at their best, and like the Feelgoods, Solid Senders and Lew Lewis, need to play small venues (if you can't reach the stage with one hand ond order at the bar with the other, it's too big).

Whether they're as limited on vinyl as the rest of their kind, remains to be heard. Meanwhile, The Inmates are one of London's greatest experiences.

They send you home feeling rowdy and looking like the Hope and Anchor's walls — red, dripping and plastered stupid.

Elissa Van Poznak

Booze, sweat and cheers



The Inmates. Pic Mick Oliver.

U.K. Subs
Urge

Derby

The crowd is chanting, the cinema is crowded and the wait in this intoxicated atmosphere is excruciating. Seated in a row of seats that doubles as a direct route to the toilets, my toes are throbbing from the regular tramplings they have received.

The audience around me is clad like willing extras on the set of some overblown punk extravaganza. All the old wrappings and trappings are everywhere.

"Sid from beyond the grave" shouts the scrawl on the wall of the ladies' loo where one preening punkette is enquiring admiringly of another's jumper. "Me mam made it," her companion simpers shyly.

Strolling onto the stage, the U.K. Subs are greeted with glee.

Three songs later and I've shut off after the first fearsome aural assault. All I can hear through the screaming volume is the smash and bash of the drums, the semi-shouted vocals and the whirring, thunderous reverberation of the guitars. In or out of tune, it's all immaterial: the songs are the same speed and almost indistinguishable (although with difficulty I do detect 'Stranglehold' and 'Tomorrow's Girls'); the sound is as base and brutal as a blunt instrument.

From the balcony the frothing and fighting of the audience below resembles the interaction of incompatible chemicals. It's not that they're listening either; they crave energy, any energy, as long as it's loud enough to induce a dazed delirium.

What was once spontaneous has now stiffened into ritual. The shovings and soft scuffles culminate at the close of the ceremony into the inevitable invasion of the stage in a final desperate search for sensation. It all looks planned, an unspoken agreement between band and acolytes.

And as The Subs are swamped, the lighting stacks teeter and stray punters sway off the stage into the surging audience, but the group still churns it out.

It isn't necessarily threatening, but then neither is it "fun"; and I don't see many people smiling as they rush like lemmings at an escapist punk parody.

Inwardly groaning I endure one interminable encore, but as the second starts I wander out into the air deafened and depressed.

I used to have a safety pin stuck in my heart for this stuff, but this sort of punk (especially on this showing) has lost its attractive amateurish edge and gone gracelessly professional. Calculating and cold, it exploits a ready-made market and cosily revolts within its own acceptable confines. It all smacks of opportunism rather than exploration and the real action has long since moved on and over and out.

Another band from the Coventry kitchen, Urge, play several songs that show they have ideas and imagination. I particularly liked 'The Evacuation' with its guitars sliding down a steep slope with an almost Eastern slant.

They now need to pull away from the purer punk (which I suspect is partly imposed by the limitations of a tour like this), define their direction and head for it harder. They have the flexibility of youth in their favour.

Lynn Hanna

GOVERNMENT TRIES TO BAN MUSIC

Zappa fights back

Joe's Garage Act 1 is the weapon – an album that turns Catholic Girls into Crew Sluts and Father Riley into Buddy Jones.
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ZAPPA

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CBS

Album: CBS 86101
Cassette: 40-86101

Shrink-wrapped cabaret

Sister Sledge

Hammersmith Odeon

Even lost in the space of Hammersmith Odeon, I couldn't help but suppose that I was a fairly average member of one section of Sister Sledge's presently quite large paying family . . .

You know, I like the singles, like to hear them in pubs, at parties, from passing cars and on the radio. It's no big deal of a crush. But the functional Chic Organisation rhythms know their place — whether it is airwave or dancefloor — and displacement into the big, live event threatens to take the flawless sheen of the hip single away. It all depends how you like your showbiz.

Leaving aside the fact that one had to sit in the dark without a drink for a whole Sunday evening, the show got off to a tepid start in the shapeless form of one TCOJ (I don't know what it means, either).

They played the kind of 'funk' that wouldn't upset a television talent show, full of all the right "bitches", "bads", "parties" and "natural rhythms", but lacking little things like purpose, interest, detail. All Marlboro man moustache and no tension — 'tight' as in boutique trousers.

Sister Sledge and their eight-piece backing band arrived in a cosmic rain of dry-ice, all rather spoilt by seeing a human hand at the side of the stage cranking the dry-ice machine (if not the cosmic rain). Each sister strode sharply onstage in strobe lit swathes of tight satin, sequins, flowing silk and higher heels — a professionally perfected mix of pretty colours, shrink wrapped imagery, solid sounds.

'Lost In Music' was the heartstop start necessary, and had it been in a club then all concerned would have moved their bodies quite appreciably around the dancefloor. Instead, everybody stayed put and could only respond mechanically to the Sisters' request to, like, clap in time, babies!

This seemed quite daft. There were all these well dressed young people sitting drinkless and in the dark, clapping hands to something obviously made, like the song sez, for dancing.

Meanwhile, Kathie Joni and Kim (I know, the souvenir booklet told me so) were telling us about some "really good times" we were to have. I mean, I thought the records were a soundtrack for good times — what happens when the single stops?

What happened was enough hack cabaret and end-of-the-pier play-acting to blush the chicest of chics.

First there was a long, slow, cocktail vamp in which a supposedly random male from the audience was positioned stage centre on a stool and seduced by each sister in turn. Derek the Audience Member adopted a surprisingly cool spotlight silhouette pose and came out with the right back chat.

Now I'm not suggesting that . . . but . . .

But then it got worse: impersonation time! Joni, Kathie and Kim impersonated their favourite stars — Diana Ross, Dolly Parton, Cher and the Andrews Sisters — with sick-making aplomb. A rap about absent sister Debbie — home with hubbie and a new baby girl Sledge — led into a melodramatic paean to "home and to love, you know?", by which time the less Las Vegas of us were searching amongst the empty popcorn packets and dog-ends for the 'good time' which we must have dropped on the way back from the lav.

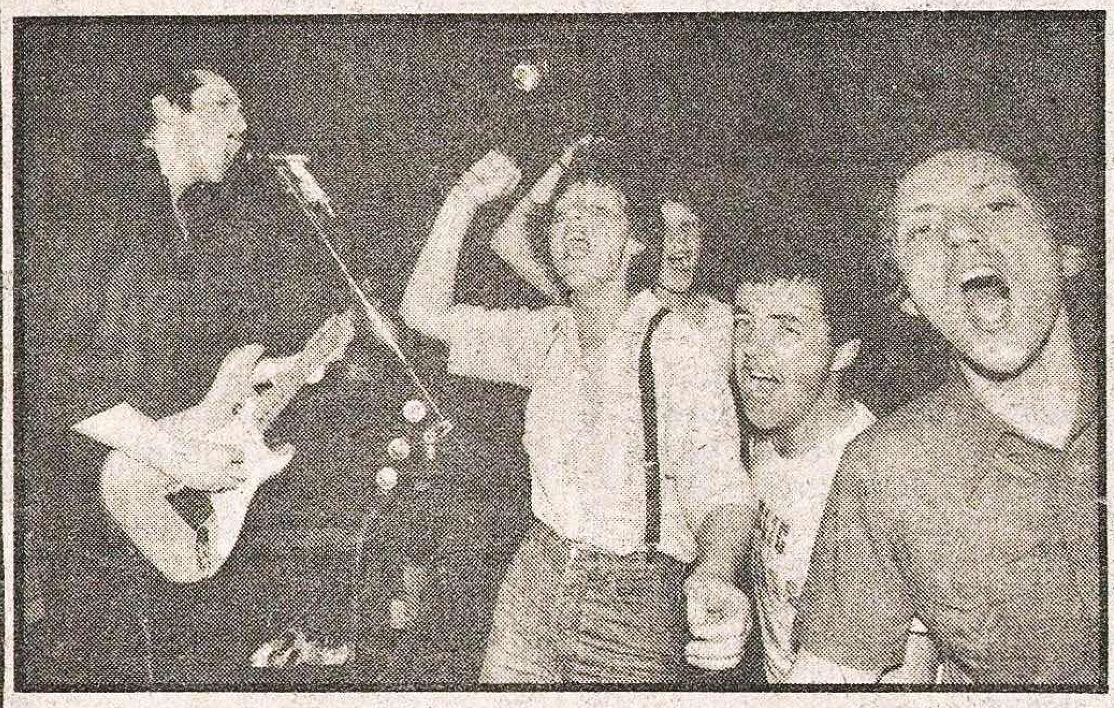
Hits and other unfamiliar bits were played and it all ended, as on a stopwatch cue, with a long, jammy version of 'We Are Family'. People actually got up to clap their hands for that one, but didn't have to wait long to find that there were no encores.

Much less of a family affair than an organisational coup (something sealed, like nationalised cabaret). If it hadn't have been for the rhythm guitarist — does he give lessons, I wonder? — I would have been lost in a lullaby.

I just hope Johnny Mathis isn't as disappointing.

Ian Penman

One Sister Sledge. Pic Kel Edge



Quads' Jack Jones. Pic Al Johnson.

The Quads

Birmingham

I wouldn't care to compare The Quads.

It's true that there is a touch of rough '50s flash and flare, but the flavour of raw, white-boys rhythm and blues nowhere near accounts for the total taste. One might just as well make an alignment with mod because each strong song is a separate entity with a memorable melody.

The proportion of old standards that they perform is perfectly palatable, but there must be thousands capable of competent covers. So it seems that it's their own clashing, clanging, endearing bounce-beat which makes them distinctive.

Jack Jones' whining, reluctant guitar, almost awkwardly at odds with everything else, gives their sound its style. And although he's also the main mover, sliding and skulking, eyes shut in enjoyment, Jack doesn't upstage the rest of the group. His brothers Johnny and Josh on drums and rhythm/vocals respectively are joined by Jim Doherty on bass to make a tidy dark-haired-dark shirted quartet turning out an exuberant, over-excited, unruly row.

'Gotta Get A Job' begins life as new blues but somehow can't seem to stop smiling, and 'UFO' is outstanding with blip-bleat guitar glancing off an insistent bass.

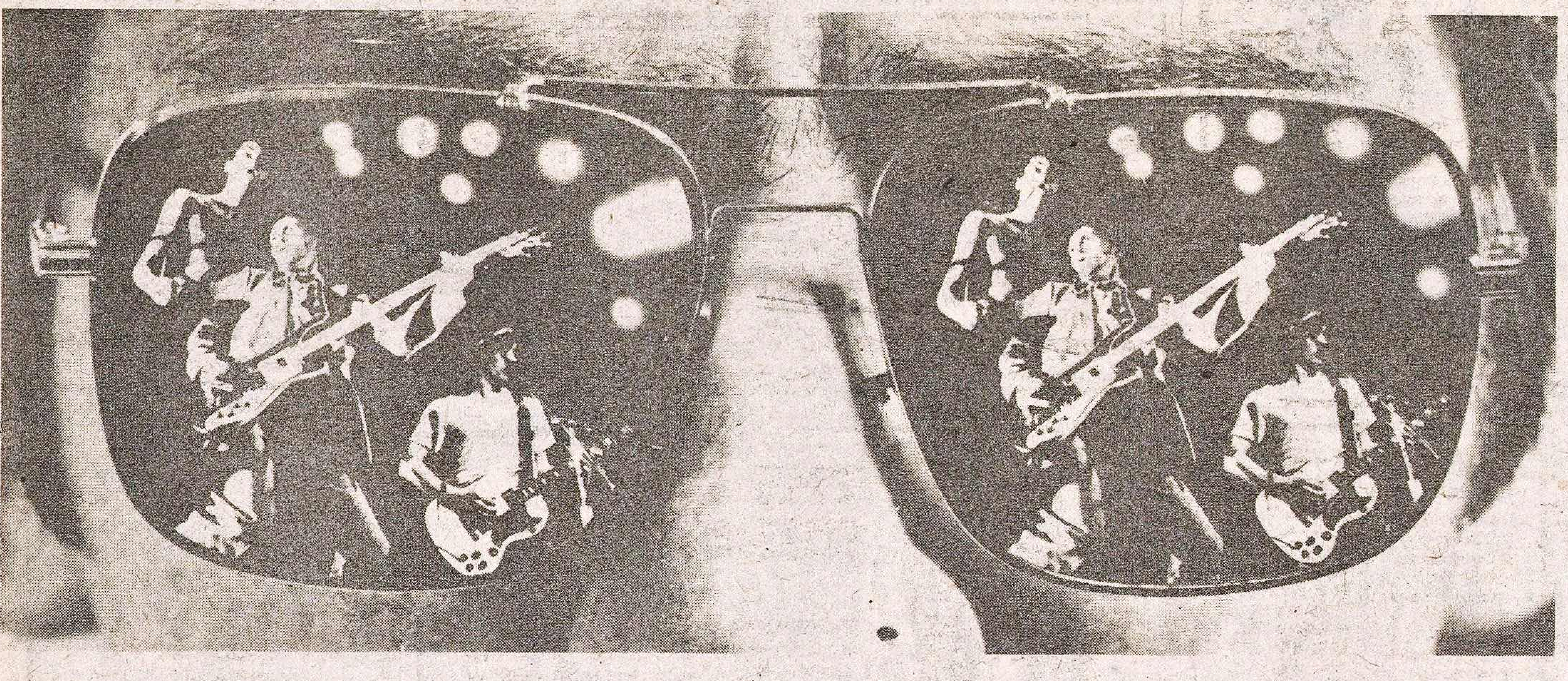
At the moment the set is still short, with encores that repeat songs earlier sung.

Two problems should be solved when more material elbows out the oldies in favour of originals.

The Quads have a shooting-star of a single, three sessions recorded for *Radio One* and judging by the occasional music industry mogul bopping beside the media-men in Brum, a fair chance of a fine future.

Lynn Hanna

Take a good look... at the newspaper exclusively for musicians.



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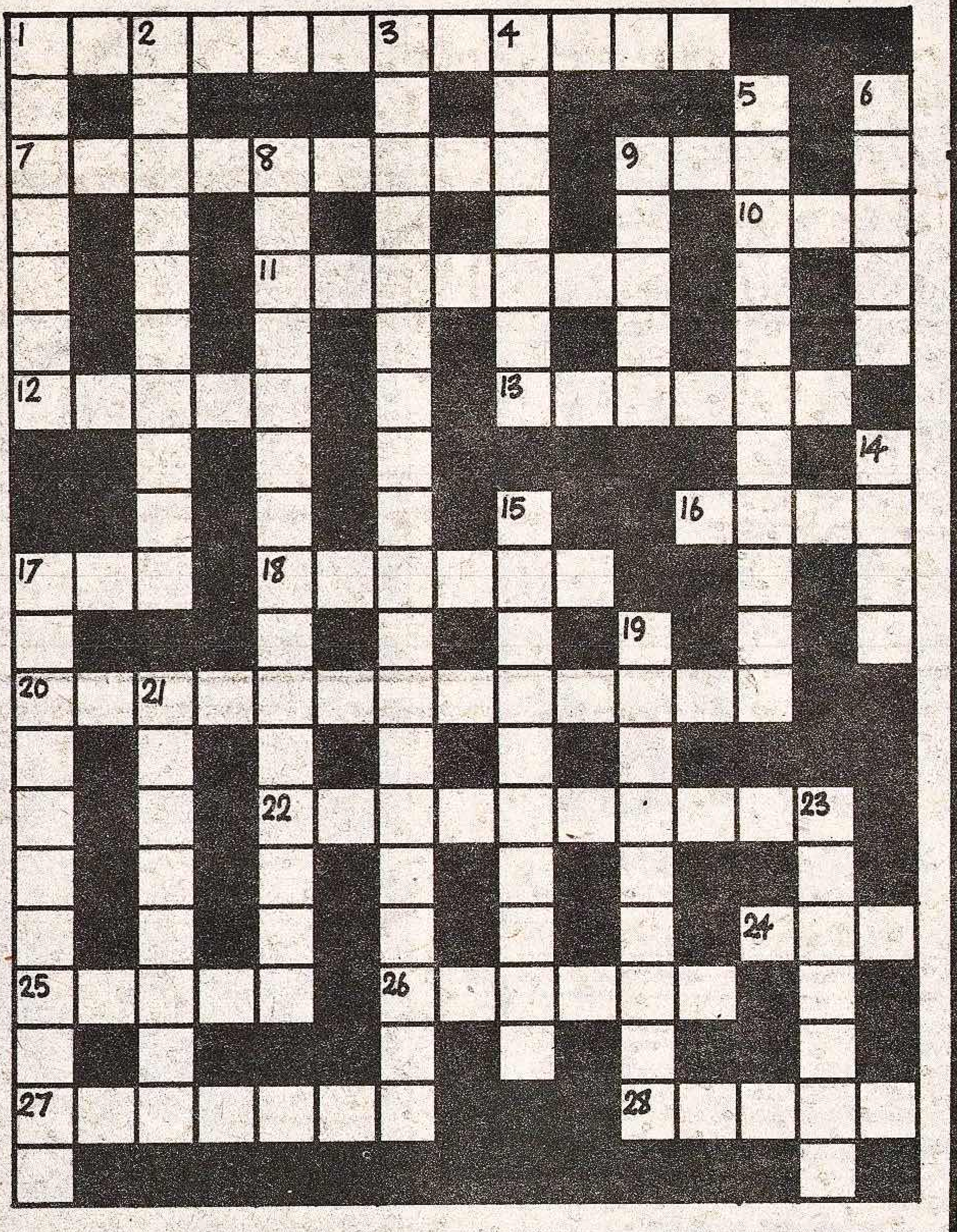

ACROSS

1 A hit for Costello soundalikes The Jags (4,2,2,4)
7 'Bright Eyes' bozo
9 Slits elpee
10 Troubled music giant
11 Mighty Mouth of Secret Affair (3,4)
12 & 20 First fling ties left (anag. 3 words)
13 Condemned to eternal torment — sounds like a punk band we know
16 See 25
17 '72 movie about a super-rat; Michael Jackson had a hit with the title song
18 Ziggy's right hand in the Spiders From Mars
20 See 12
22 A hit for The Crusaders (after all these years) (6,4)
24 Mr Nugent presumably
25 &16 Chiffons classic allegedly plagiaried by Hari Georgeson for 'My Sweet Lord' (3,2,4)
26 R&B standard recorded by Van Morrison's Them, covered by Patti Smurf
27 See 14
28 From the days when The Moody Blues had 'street' credibility, this was their 1964 debut hit *(a cover of the Bessie Banks original — Mod Ed)* (2,3)

DOWN

1 Pity radio can't kill the video stars!
2 James Taylor's got an interest in Colin's army!
3 Follow-up to 'Life Begins At The Hop', their last mini-hit (6,5,3,5)
4 Beach Boys album named after the country in which it was recorded
5 Admission of kleptomania from Fleetwood Mac; with all her money it's disgraceful! (6,5)
6 & 23 Their Monkees (ang. 2 words)
8 '60s Nostalgia Corner: Who had a 1965 No 1 with 'Concrete And Clay' (4,4,4,3)
9 Seminal turn of the decade rock combo — made a fortune in filthy lucre, Americano issue!
14 & 27 Made his name as Yankee ringmaster of J. Cocker's Mad Dogs revue
15 The Hermit of Manhattan (4,6)
17 US soul singer whose biggest success was the much-covered 'Lean On Me' (4,7)
19 Then a girl (ang. 2 words)
21 Would you expect to see them on a *package tour* (nudge nudge)!!?
23 See 6

ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 'Spiral Scratch'; 6 (Steely) Dan; 8 'My Way'; 9 '(White) Riot'; 11 Wailers; 12 '(Life Of) Brian'; 14 (Janet) Kay; 15 Allen Klein; 16 Alexis (Korner); 17 'Up Town Top (Ranking)'; 18 'Come On'; 19 The Jags; 21 Meat Loaf; 23 'Kid'; 25 Nico; 26 Gene Chandler; 27 'Help'; 28 Steely (Dan); 29 Grin.

DOWN: 1 'Slow Train Coming'; 2 'Roll Over Beethoven'; 3 'Le Freak'; 4 Roy Orbison; 5 'Crying In The Chapel'; 6 'Dat'; 7 Frank Zappa; 10 '(Tracks) Of My Tears'; 12 '(Up Town Top) Ranking'; 17 Union Gap; 19 'Tracks (Of My Tears)'; 20 'Guilty'; 22 Funky; 23 (Alexis) Korner; 24 Dr John.

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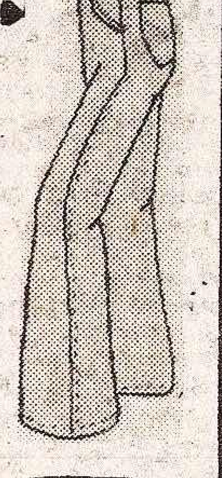

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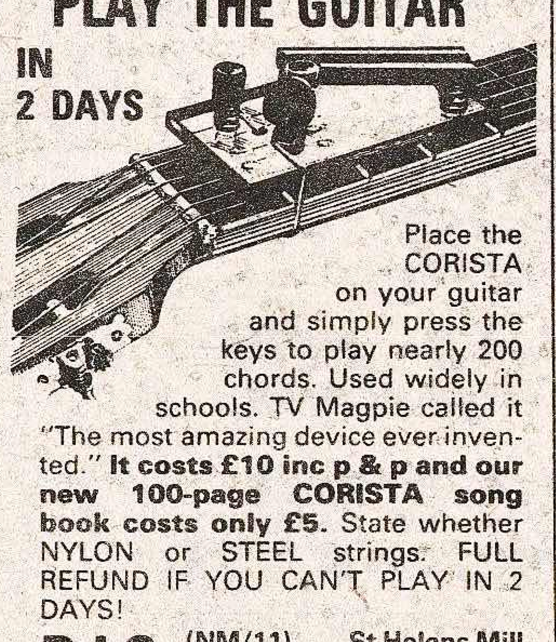

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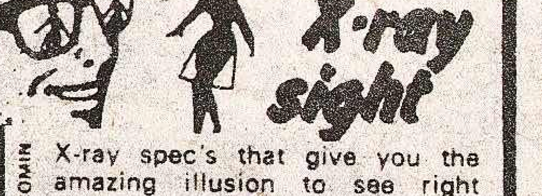

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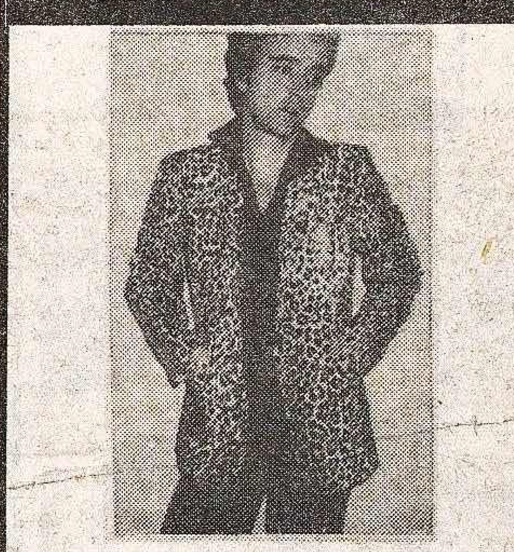

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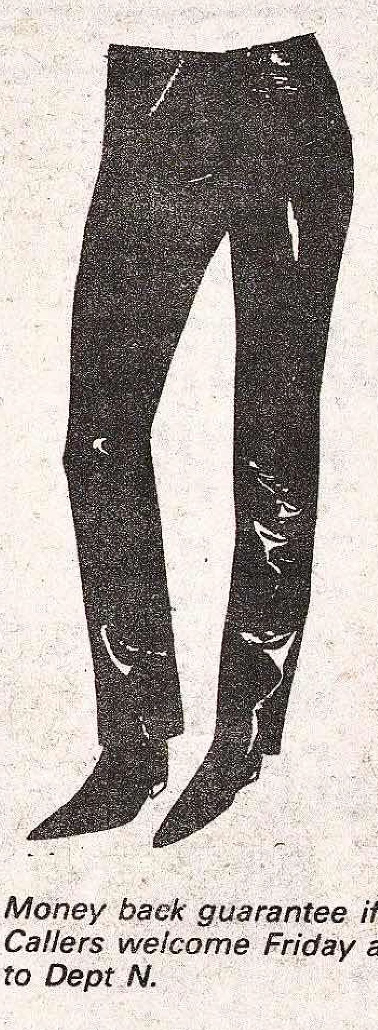

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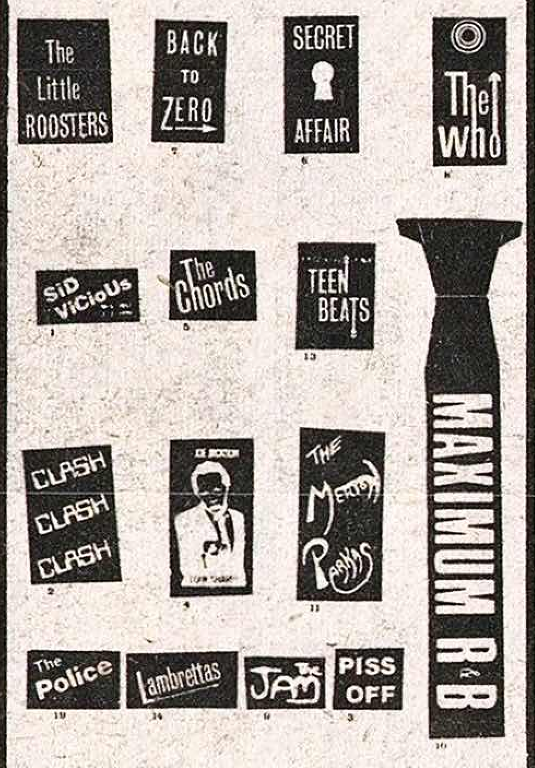

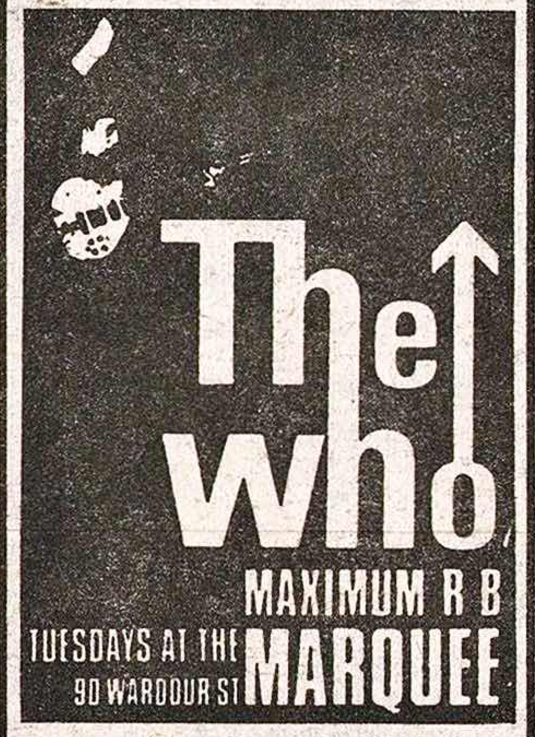

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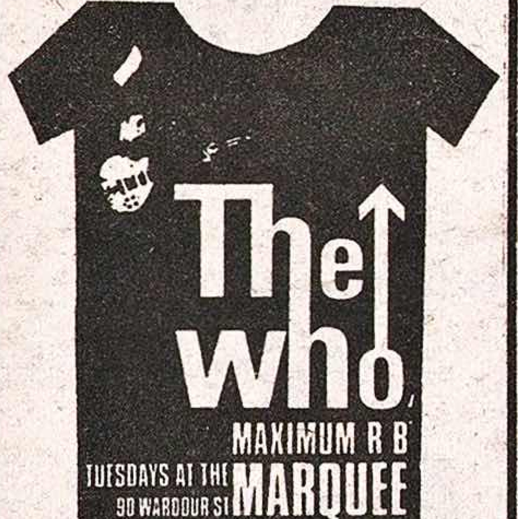

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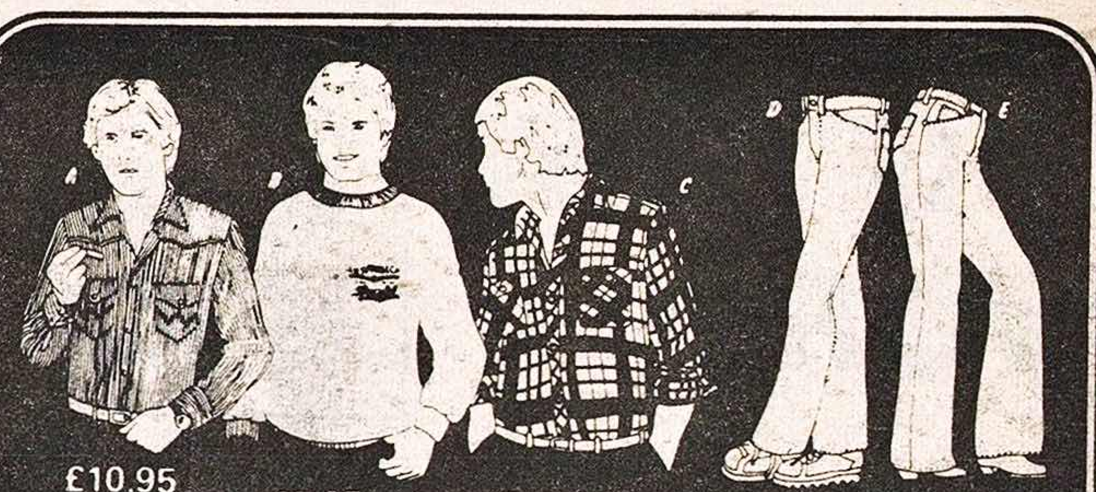

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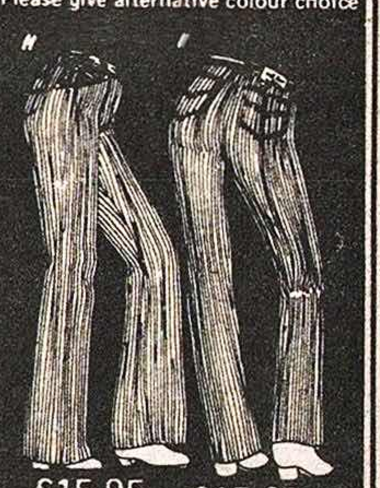

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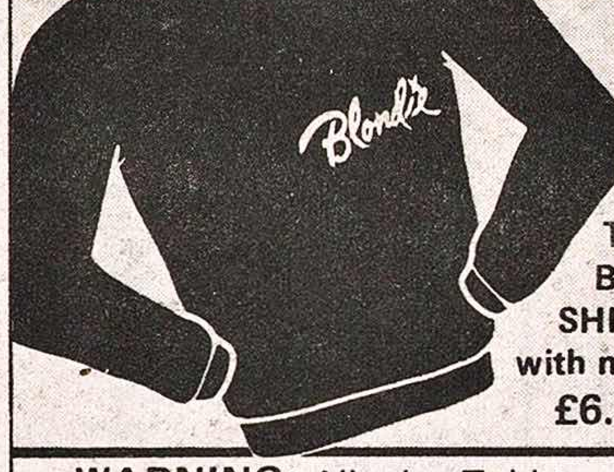

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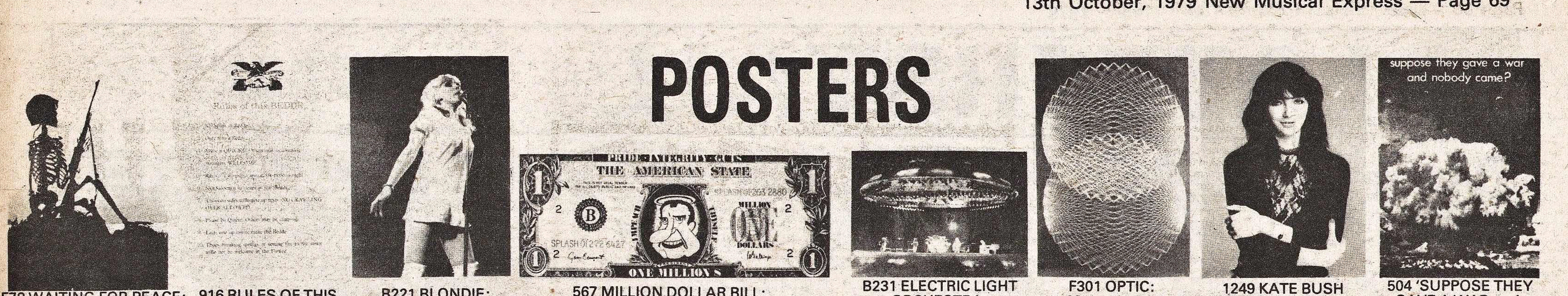

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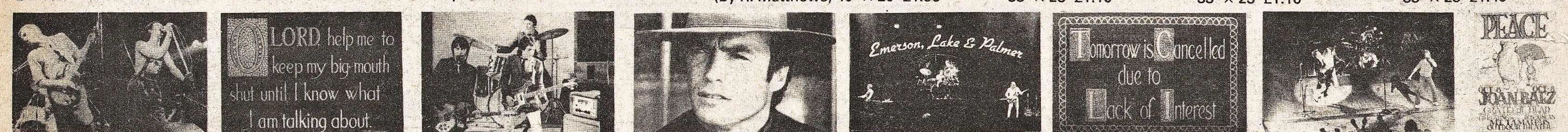

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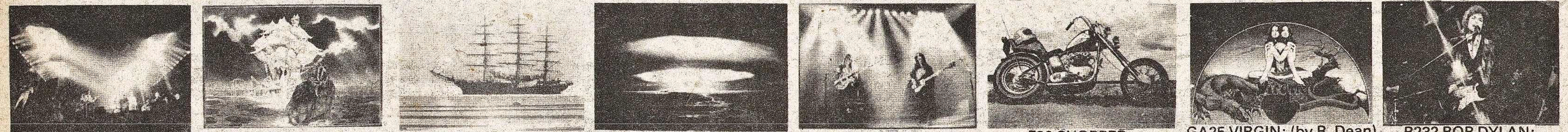

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Gang Of Four ■ From 8

for a career. If it comes to the point, say, where we dry up, there'll be no point in us existing. None of us want to be in a group just for the sake of it."

Do you foresee any problems if you do achieve commercial success?

Burnham: "It's difficult to think about something that may not happen for months. Or ever."

Gill: "You've gotta plan for it though or someone will plan it for you. One thing that would happen is that we'd be expected to play more and turn out more records, which gives you less time to consider what you're doing.

"We're agreed that we're beginning to feel those pressures now, so we've decided that after this British tour we're not gonna do any *long* tours. So that after each bout of playing, we can reconsider what we're about and have time to write new songs. And that may result in less records being sold or less money being made because the rock business has worked out over the years that the most efficient way of pushing product is by doing massive tours."

Burnham: "And this idea of the 'stimulation' of being on the road is just a pile of crap."

King: "I think our ideas don't come from those rock 'n' roll cliches about being on the road — which inspired, like, The Rolling Stones in their worst phase. 'Under My Thumb' coming from 'too many motel rooms and too many dumb broads' or whatever their quote was.

"A lot of our inspiration comes from living ordinary lives, like being able to go to the pub and nobody gives a monkey's."

Gill: "Uh? I don't get inspiration from being in the pub."

Burnham: "That was just an example, you prat."

It's impossible to convey in cold print all the tug and flow of group discussion. You lose the hesitancies, the jokes, the interruptions — all vital parts of that collective tussle for clarity which makes The Gang Of Four so important.

The circumstances of the struggle are constantly changing. The debates will continue. And, hopefully, the progress *'Our great expectations / A Future for the good'*.

All they're asking is that you think about it.

Tom Verlaine ■ From 29

Verlaine's indifference to commercialism is not born of an imperious attitude. He's no rich pop star. He lives in a low rent flat in lower Manhattan, on an income that he says derives from album royalties and can't be too high. But he's not the type to go out of his way for anybody's idea of what he should do, whether it be band partners, producers or record companies.

"I like performing and I am looking forward to doing it, but it's not as easy as it was a few years ago. It was easy to get tour support from Elektra, but now Elektra is in dire straits, as the saying goes, and I can't do it without that system. It costs thousands of dollars a week to put a band on the road . . ."

What about just going into some local clubs to play a few dates?

"Sure, I'd do that. It's pretty easy to go play clubs. I don't know what the sound systems are like now — I haven't been in any of those places in a long time."

Funny you should mention that, Tom. It's an oft-made comment that while Television was the first rock and roll band to play CBGB's, Verlaine had always remained aloof from the scene he had helped to create.

"It's great to get the credit for starting the scene, but it's not strictly true. It was an accomplishment to find a bar in New York at that time that would present unrecorded acts and let you play no matter how bad you were. And, we could make money there. Not at first, but as we got a following over the years.

"I used to perform solo with an electric guitar at little clubs around New York, do a couple of sets at Gerde's Folk City or fifteen minutes at Reno Sweeny's. I'd do extended versions of 'Marquee Moon' with, like, twenty verses. This was '71 or '72, I don't know, way back. That's when Terry Ork brought Richard Lloyd to see me. The Neon Boys had broken up, and Hell was saying, 'Hey, this guy Ork has some money and he wants to back a band.'

"There weren't any other bands around when we started playing CBGB's, except for the Dolls who were going through problems with changing managers and stuff. So we played there on Sunday nights. Then Patti Smith came along And the Ramones came along, and we built it up.

"As to not hanging out, it's something that people ask me about all the time. I don't think that attitude is so unique. Hanging out in bars, it is what it is. It's getting happy and talking a mile a minute. I don't mean that demeaningly. I don't go out to bars and talk about all the bands 'cause I'm not motivated in that way. I do hear about bands I'd like to go out and see. I just never get around to it."

Fair enough. Verlaine is not the anti-social monster some past interviews have made him out to be. He is a very private man, and shy with strangers. He needs to be drawn out into talking about his work — specific questions about the themes of his songs generally met with the shortest replies. But the solitary artist doesn't bite.

Finally, I wondered how this enigmatic man typically spends his days.

"I'm always writing, working on stuff. I'm always throwing stuff out, too. I spend more time writing things and throwing them out than anything else.

"How much can a human being do that's so different from what any other human being does?"

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Mods, schmods, rockers, schmockers, punks, sch —

YES, WELL, THAT'S FAR ENOUGH. JUST WHAT SORT OF BAG IS THIS?

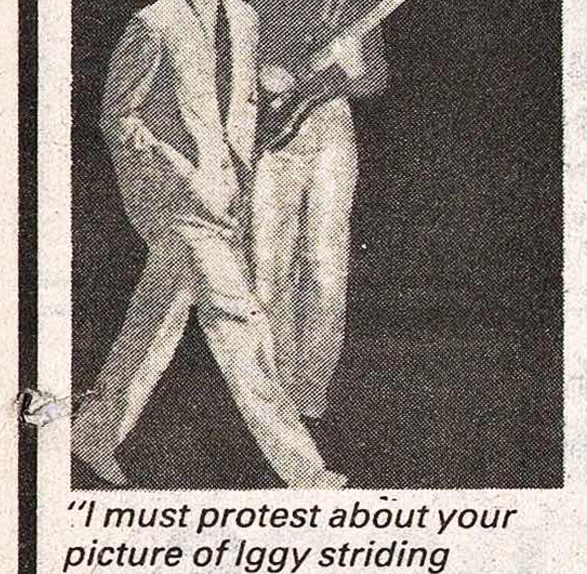
SO THIS is the great new age of music — or so many of your younger hacks, Peel etc. would have us believe. So exciting to have all those independents providing such an excellent opportunity for all those earnest young chaps with their thin black ties and baggy pants to 'express' themselves. OK, sometimes their music may be dumb but their attitudes . . .

On the other hand we still have the spiky-pin brigade with their oh-so-vital street-level brand of heavy metal. And on top of this we have the exhilirating mod revival, not to mention the brave nu-musik crowd, the wrap-around trilby set and, oh yes, even disco now that Danny's given it the OK.

The point is that what was two-three years ago a genuinely exciting and creative period in music has dissipated into an extremely boring, complacent one with its succession of dead-end trends and redundant rip-offs. Thankfully, there are still bands around like Talking Heads — breaking new ground and, yes, actually stretching themselves — who don't rely on current fashions and Mike Read.

Sad to say, this present state of affairs is reflected in the *NME*, for what was once a highly entertaining, informative and critically articulate paper is now an extremely flat, witless one. The good writers have either copped out or keep their contributions to a minimum (even the mainman Nick K. has mellowed) and the lion's share is in the hands of the likes of Morley and Thrills who possess none of the wit, suss and perception essential to good criticism.

It now seems that Nick Logan's *T-Zer* award for 'The Fastest Rat Off The Sinking Ship' was kind of prophetic, so before the paper ends up like *Sounds* let's have a considerable shake-up and don't forget the effect you can have (re: the 'Titanic' articles).
Dave J., Aberdeen
Time's been better but I'm making do with these, to quote some complacent sod or other (Tom Rush, I think). But you lack verve and humour, Dave, else *you'd* be doing something. And you're as subjective as everyone else with your T. Heads schtick. — M.S.



"I must protest about your picture of Iggy striding through an art gallery in last week's issue. The picture of Jim was in fact lifted from a recent tour photo of NSQ (Normal Service Quintet), the actual gig being in the Charlton Assembly Rooms night club. I'm sure Jim will be most upset to see this has happened and by printing the pic I enclose you will put his mind at rest." — C. J. Powell, London SE12.

One of your scribes once had the fortune to review an excellent Secret Affair single. He grovelled "Wait till the real sharks get back". Well, where are they?

Johnny Rotten hasn't sold out 'cos he's got nothing to sell. And what about old Joe "I'm so bored with the USA" Strummer. Are you Joe? You seem to spend most of your pathetic life over there.

Crass are small time anarchists. UK Subs are dull. Gary Numan has beaten Adam Ant in the David Bowie look-a-like and sound-a-like competition.

Some sharks!

And now 'Tone and Jools' have got married. I'll feel sorry for the kids. "God save family planning, it made you a potential rock critic duo".

Don't knock mod when every other form of music is floundering in its own vomit.
Mick the Mod, Clapham Common, SW4.
Tell that to Joe Bach, Tony Webern, Jerry Goldsmith or Randy Newman, for starters. Wise up, Mick. — M.S.

Why can't people just listen to what they like and accept that other people like other music? Or is that a little too complicated?
Dave (don't wanna be a stereotype), Sheffield.
Exactly. — M.S.

I am puzzled as to why everybody is getting so emotional about seeing their fave group slagged by some elitist hack. You gotta realise that punk, mod, whatever isn't a way of life — if it is, that's pretty sad — it's all just you at an aural crossroads.

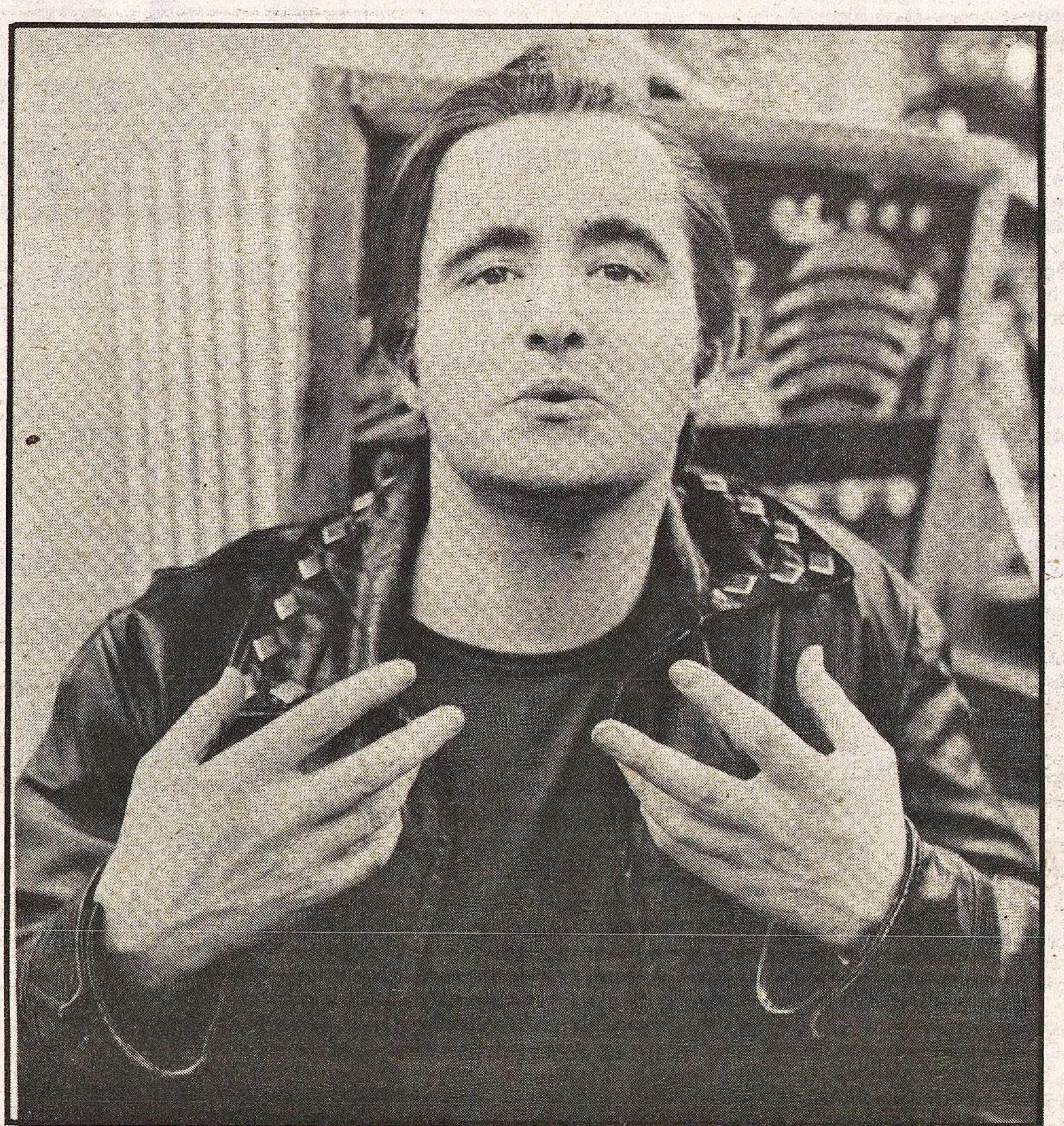
OK, so it's a fun expression of human emotions but it isn't a substitute for human relationships. The reason I like it is that I prefer it to other equally false games that society throws up.
Nick Noyes, London W8
Double secret exactly. — M.S.

I gather Ian Penman wants to get some sort of constructive argument going after his diatribe on sexism in *Thrills*. Might I suggest that he — I presume he's a man — stows the very pretentious attitude he appears to take and ask himself whether he's speaking for women or against them.

The notion that women are *per se* weak, helpless victims of oppression and repression is just as much a stereotype as the 'women as plastic kewpie doll' image/myth. Most men aren't chunky hunks of beefcake or potential rapists, so why should anyone be afraid of stereotype?

The average woman is often the wrong shape which, in turn, has nothing to do with her self-respect. That is determined by the way she sees herself and no-one else's opinions count. If reasonable adults want to start thinking of themselves as 'victims' that is up to them, but to go on about it being degrading to all women because a few flash their tits is downright demeaning.

I really enjoy being a girl so kindly keep your hang-ups to yourself in future!
Jan Hart, Tottington, Lancs.



"Me, I go for the moving schmeltzenheimer strings of Laurence Welk."

Ian Penman seems to consider the advertisements with sexist bias which have recently appeared in *NME* offensive and objectionable; I feel he is mistaken on two counts. Firstly, he goes on to say that these are reinforcing a myth, but we all know it's a myth, and I feel no more oppressed by these than by *Rupert Bear Goes To Coon Island* or *Mein Kampf*. Such advertisements provide a reminder of the aims of a section of the industry and of the methods employed to advance them, and encourage a more realistic impression of the largely sordid music industry that would be obtained by operating a veto on such items according to editorial policy.

Secondly, I welcome the inclusion of controversial and contradict material both from advertisers and staff. Surely provocation to a reassessment of the readers' personal morals is a more worthy venture than total commitment to a particular ethical stance which would only produce sustained cheers or boos from readers, depending on their unchallenged affiliations. Like, putting them in and then giving Ian Penman a say has made me attempt to clarify my own opinions through writing this letter, know what I mean?
Ex-EMI Tea lady, Hayes, Middlesex.
Not exactly, but where Ian's concerned that's quite natural — M.S.

The *NME* must think sexism's a big joke, or they wouldn't have left Ian Penman to write about it.
Fred Wholan, Ealing, W5.

The sexism of these macho heroes of working class blokes is at least open in degrading women. Different to the intellectual outpourings so idolised by the well educated lads that read *NME* (Dylan, Bowie and everything else), which just ignore women or tone down the rape fantasies a bit. Rock is about controlling everyone's sexuality in different ways. Every *NME* helps.
Chris.
That's a pretty damn androgynous name — M.S.

I have determined the sex of *NME* after reading your reviews of the new Zappa and Brand X albums. You must be female as you have, in Messrs. Penman and Ellen, two tits.
Noddy, a pool room rear Sweden, Kent.

Re: *Gasbag* 29.9.79 and *Thrills* 29.9.79.

Dear Gill Kent/Ian Penman, and whoever has chosen to be concerned about The Slits cover; sunny afternoon, spontaneous idea, mud, fun — sex or Island's profits couldn't have been farther from my mind.

Remember art? Censorship.
Pennie Smith
P.S. There are bare faces on the back. You failed to mention this.
Who could remember bare faces? Or Art? Or censorship? We're talking about bosoms here! — M.S.

Neither — it's 'Slut' by The Clits.
Juan Liner.
Well, *I* was talking about bosoms — M.S.

I am definitely a Tiller Boy. I can identify with all the characteristics of being one. I like Buzzcocks and all different types of music. I am a naive romantic and have had my heart broken (well, at least cracked) three times and it's gonna happen again this week, I think. I am a lower middle class teenager and can fall in love easily. I am insecure. If anyone else is a Tiller Boy — go on, admit it.

Also, to be a Tiller Boy you've got to be painfully honest. Tiller Boys don't rule.
J.R. East London
Ain't that a fact — M.S.

I bought a cassette from Virgin Records, Oxford Street and got home only to discover there was no tape in it — the spools were empty!

Is this the ultimate response to the soaring cost of tapes and records and the competition in the cut price record stores? Is this a plan by Joe Elitist of Def Leppard (*NME* 29.9.79) to prove his point, that women never buy rock records?

Keep up with the high standard of bitter, twisted reporting and cynical record reviews *NME!*
June J. Lamb, London SW3.
P.S. The man who sold me the tape looked like one of Debbie Harry's chums in Blondie — but he won't by the time you receive this letter.

Hey, Ken and Angie of Croydon, maybe you should take some advice from M.S. and read some of Kerouac's shit. Maybe then you'll discover why Bob likes trains so much.
PSST! Wanna buy some Kerouac novels, second-hand, also Steinbeck, Ginsberg, Walt Whitman etc? Must sell quickly, as I want to get a scooter and have one final go for Satori!
Huang Po, Mount Fuji, Yorkshire

In my opinion, Bob Dylan should be reported to the RSPCA. For the many years he's been singing, he has been keeping a poor little frog in his throat.

It shouldn't be allowed.
Marguerita Askham, Upton, Pontefract.

Bob Dylan is to religion what E. J. Thribb is to poetry.
Mick Millett, Nottingham (temporarily).
That good, eh? — M.S.

If *NME* contributors were something approximating modern poetry, Ian Penman would fit neatly into a niche with W. H. Auden's helmetted airman. Or so I've heard.
Sammy Hagar, San Francisco, Shropshire.
This is the first time I've failed to understand Sammy Hagar. — M.S.

So howcum 'Mittageisen' means 'Metal Postcard'? Mittag = Midday; Eisen = Iron. Midday Iron, anyone?
Maxine Cook, Telford.

Judging by the man and his marketing, might I suggest that perhaps Mr. Lydon's 'Metal Box' could be likened to Lou Reed's 'Metal Machine Music' — a "Let's see how many suckers actually *buy* it" ploy?
Michael Sandy, Luton, Beds.

I used to be in a band once, but it's cheaper in the audience. I was under the impression that times were changing!
A.G., Bristol.

Dear Paul, please don't let me be misunderstood.
Bob G., Edinburgh.
We have it on good authority that the G stands for Geldof, the Paul stands for Morley, and the bit in between is an attempt to explain away a dubious Irish joke. — M.S.

I have noticed that you, in your own unique way, have been slagging off *Star Trek*. I think this is unfair and very underhand as the man who operates the puppets cannot strike back.
Spoke (alias Stephen Jack), Birmingham.

Does tha' know, I thought tha'd actually got Crossword reet this week 'til I got to seven down. Everyone in Yorkshire knows that George Harrison's ballad from 'Abbey Road' is called 'Summat', but it don't fit.
Terry Tapeworm, Yorkshire.

How come the Pope missed out Wembley and Bingly Hall on his tour of the world? I don't know a lot about music but there's a rumour going round that he had a bigger following than Led Zeppelin had at both Knebworth dates. Is this the latest thing? What's it called? Pope music? I didn't read a thing about him in *NME* so please print his tour plans next time.
Cardinal Sicola, The Vatican, Oldham.
P.S. I wanted to be Pope but I'd've felt a bit daft being called Pope Sicola.

I'm sorry if I made you miss Bugs Bunny.
Pope John Paul II.

I've known something of Tony Parson's sketchy reputation for the past few months now, but how far his unfunny sense of humour extended was unclear. However, reading his review of a Ricky Nelson single (29.9.79) I was quite shocked in realising how malicious and sick this Tony Parsons is by directing such unprovoked insults against Ricky Nelson. Maybe he should do the decent thing and have his hands blown off to prevent him writing such turgid rubbish.
Symon Cowan, London.
P.S. I'm not a Ricky Nelson fan.
Even so, you appear to be remarkably level-headed. — M.S.

Billy from Brighton:

Please accept an I.O.U. for £6 from all the staff at the East Ham Wimpy.
All the staff at the East Ham Wimpy.
This fund now stands at £7. — M.S.

Forget art. Forget censorship. Write to Gasbag. Edited by Monty Smith.

T-ZERS

MUGS

Desmond of The Selecter shows The Specials' Jerry Dammers how to ride a scooter and raise a toast at the same time in the foyer of the Coventry ABC whence they had come to view the Quadrophenia movie. Charlie, dread-locked bassist with the same Selecter, discreetly liberates a packet of popcorn and wonders if the dummy they borrowed from Burton's to complete this Midlands tableaux was really modelled on Secret Affair's Seb Shelton. Pic: Al Johnson.

WHAT A perfectly wonderful week it has been, my little ones. Have we got a simply scurrilous selection of super stories for you? Have we just! All the gossip, the scandal, the rumours, the tinsel, the glamour, the outright lies that make this pop business such fun! It's all here! Oh yes! *(Oh no. — Ed.)*

Much as *T-Zers* likes to see justice done, wrongs righted, truth out, and so forth, the appearance of three full page ads from Knebworth promoter **Fred Bannister** in Britain's leading rock organs last week left all three dots rather at a loss to discern between their normally able selves just what exactly the purpose of it all was. Bannister seemed keen to clarify a few points as regard **Led Zeppelin's** tumultuous return to the British open-air squinting championships; points that no-one had ever even bothered to raise! Strange behaviour, costly too (the tune of £2,470 was whistled), and certainly not what you'd expect of one so impoverished.

Bannister recently declared his Knebworth company bankrupt and, stranger still, the same thing happened some ten years previous when he promoted the Bath festival, featuring the very same behemoths of the English rock scene (and we don't mean **Chas and Dave**). Remember, Fred, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you . . .

The part of the industry worst hit by the so-called slump — liggers — were so grateful to Chrysalis for entertaining them in the style to which they were once accustomed at a party in Beverley Hills that many could actually recall afterwards that it was in aid of popsters **Blondie! James Caan, Karen Black, Frankie Valli, Rita Hayworth** and **Tanya Tucker** were among the hundreds who gorged themselves on a suicidal combination of curry and free booze at the Beverley Hills Fiorucci store. The Blondies rolled up for the bash in a US army M-24 tank. That's the stuff careers are made of . . .

So's this: **Gary Numan** took a petulant stance minutes before his gig at Aylesbury last weekend and threatened to call it all off after being flung some casual abuse by punky types in the town centre earlier in the day. He was persuaded to play despite misgivings about the Friars security and on condition that no cameras be allowed in the hall. Excitable factions in the crowd unable to refrain from yelling 'wanker' at the Futuristic One were threatened with ejection. There is no truth to the rumour that Gary Numan has the same dentist as **David Bowie** . . .

Motorhead have embarked on a fitness drive prior to their forthcoming November tour. **Lemmy** says he's subsituting milk for Special Brew. Frankly *T-Zers* finds that a bit hard to swallow . . .

Tourists Jim 'Do It' **Toomey** and **Eddie Chin**, while on holiday in Ibiza, came into contact with a cholera victim and are now being held in quarantine on the package tour paradise, thus forcing the cancellation of the band's European tour. Fascinating . . .

But not half as fascinating as the news that **Freddie Mercury** of preening glam-rock dodos **Queen** realised a lifelong ambition the other day. No, he didn't find somebody who took him seriously; actually, dears, he performed in the Royal Ballet at the London Coliseum. The show included a specially choreographed version of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and, said a silver leotarded Fred after many gruelling rehearsals: "This is pulling me apart, but it's a wonderful experience." This is believed to refer to the rehearsals and not the silver leotard . . .

Not only that but **Sting,** hardly a man we would have expected to nurse ambitions of a classical nature, is talking over the possibility of singing a new opera by German composer **Eberhard Schoener** . . .

However, rock's real golden throat, **Joey Ramone,** has successfully ignored many lucrative offers to star in the **Shakespeare** classic *Ramoneo And Juliet* and opted instead to help out New York band **The Rattlers** on backing vocals for their single deboo 'On The Beach'. They used to be called **Birdland** when they backed **Lester Bangs** and feature not only the son of Metropolitan Opera star **Robert Merrill** on bass, but also Joey's kid brother **Mitch** on guitar. Life's full of these coincidences . . .

Dave Cunningham, chief joker in the **Flying Lizards** (not the leggy one) recently landed the guest DJ spot in New York's upmarket punky nite-spot, Hurrah's. Patrons found his spins a trifle eclectic. Says Dave: "I don't so much like tunes as noises, especially running water noises". Again, fascinating . . .

With the **Boomtown Rats** new album currently going under a handle not far removed from 'The Fine Art Of Surfing' (though it might be 'Surfacing' or even 'Suffocation') the support band on the B. Rats current tour, **Protex,** thought it might be a splendid wheeze to buy the Chief Rat a snorkel and a pair of goggles for his birthday (don't ask us why, but it might help to know that they too are Irish). Protex then forced **Bobsie** to show his appreciation by guzzling large quantities of Blue Lagoon (a crippling mix of alcohols) through his brand new snorkelling apparatus. This is believed to have put him in a suitable frame of mind to receive the news that **Brenda Spencer,** whose lack of restraint one fateful Monday in California provided the inspiration for the Rats' last single, landed a 25-year jail sentence. "That'shh sshad," shaid The Mouth (hic) . . .

Long faces are being pulled in the **Cheap Trick** camp subsequent to their poor showing on a recent Euro-trek. Pop kiddies across the continent stayed away in their droves and several promoters dropped the odd note here and there, one in Brussels losing as much as three grand on a single show . . .

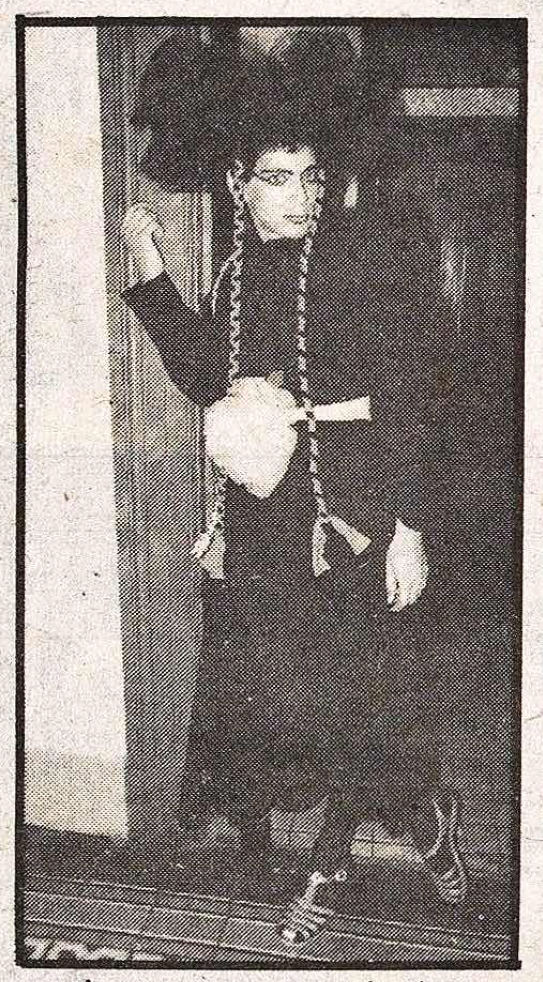
EMI, who distribute Island records, refused to handle their forthcoming **Marianne Faithful** album 'Broken English' because of the dodgy lyrical content of one of the tracks. Called 'Why Did You Do It?' and written by **Heathcote Williams,** it features such telling couplets as "spit on my snatch" etc., etc., and will be out, if anybody cares, at the end of this month. The terminally reclusive **Stevie Winwood** plays keyboards, and there is also a version of 'Working Class Hero'. Yet again, fascinating . . .

Paul Fox of **The Ruts** now sports a credibility enhancing facial that's not, as is widely believed, the work of an irate fan, but was in fact self-inflicted when the bozo quaffed a bottle of Vodka, dropped it, and then fell face first on to the glass missing his jugular by a mere fraction of an inch. *(Haven't you got anything better than this, like who was backstage at the Pope's gig or something? — Ed.)* . . .

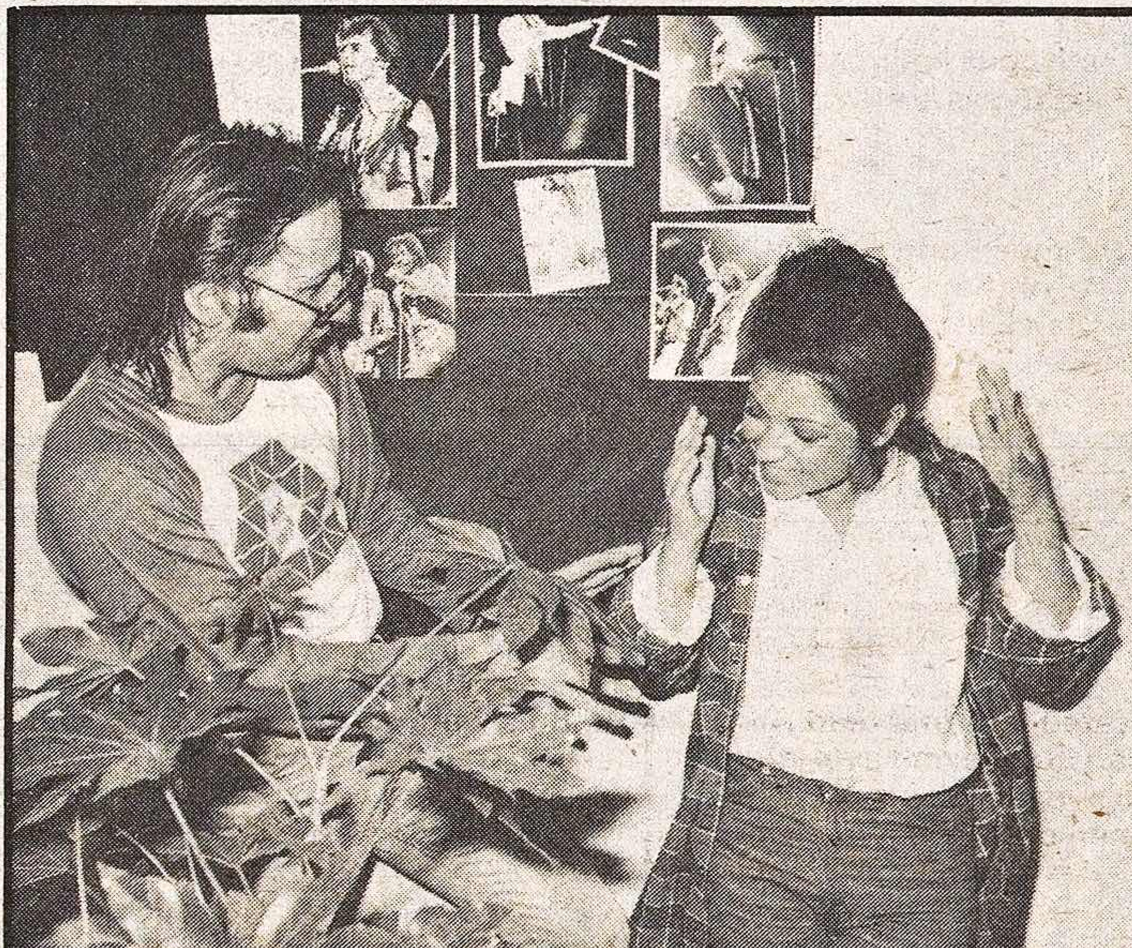
Er, no, but it hasn't escaped our notice that, before **The Specials Costello**-produced album can be said to be even near the proverbial can, some dastardly felon has slipped an unofficial live disc into a few sleazy outlets. Rumour has it (and we haven't a clue where we got it) that the tapes stem from live gigs record at the Moonlight club six months back . . .

Fun-loving **Darts** members **Thump Thomson, George Curry** and **Hammy Howell** spent a night in the cooler after allegedly committing 'criminal damage' to a large hotel somewhere in Britain. Also incarcerated, but purely in the interest of good journalism (or so they claim) were one **Danny Baker** and **Kelly Pike** of *Record Mirror.* All were later released and no charges were brought.

Once again **Little Richard** has forsaken the devil's music for the path of the Lord. He first renounced his seminal rock'n'roll career in '57, and has since attempted to stage a number of comebacks. Perhaps fired by the recent examples of other showbiz figures, Richard, 43, testified to a California Fundamentalist tent meet that rock'n'roll is "sending you to hell. I gave up rock'n'roll for the Rock Of Ages. If God can save me, an old homosexual, he can save anybody!" Not even Jewish acid casualties are beyond His reach . . .



A star contestant in the Dutch heat of the Lene Lovich look-alike trials. Seems like a nice boy. Pic: Jill Furmanovsky



"No kidding, it was this big": Rachel Sweet tries to convince Southside Johnny of the size of her last elpee. Pic: George Bodnar

"You'd think a man in my position wouldn't have to do this sort thing to get in T-Zers." Sting guards the Tardis while Tom Baker checks out Motorhead at Reading. 999 are on United Artists. Pic: Paul Canty

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